On the Journey of Life

Rev. Francis X. Lasance

Nihil Obstat.

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Excerpted from…

THE YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE

COUNSELS, REFLECTIONS, AND PRAYERS FOR CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN

BY

REV. F. X. LASANCE.

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BENZIGER BROTHERS,
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St. Joseph most chaste,
St. Joseph most faithful,
Pray for us.

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth"

— Ecclesiastes xii. 1.

"Be thou an example of the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity"

— 1 Timothy iv. 12.

"Rejoice, therefore, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart be in that which is good"

— Ecclesiastes xi. 9.

"Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is all man"

— Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

"What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap....In doing good let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap"

— Galatians vi. 8, 9.

"To him that soweth justice, there is a faithful reward"

— Proverbs xi. 18.

"Listen attentively, my son, to the voice of thy teacher; incline to him the ear of thy heart; receive gratefully the fatherly admonitions of one who loves thee, and resolutely strive to act in accordance with them."

— St. Benedict.

Let your watchword be: All for the greater glory of God and in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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The Dream of St. Joseph, Rizi 1665

BODY:

St. Joseph and the Christ Child, Coello 1666

The Vocation of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Guercino 1650

Christ Pantocrator, Deesis mosaic, Hagia Sophia, 1261

Preface

The success of *The Catholic Girl's Guide* augurs well, we trust, for the reception which awaits its present companion. Zealous directors of souls have urged us to undertake this work, and we entertain the hope that pastors will introduce *The Young Man's Guide* to the boys of their respective parishes and especially to the boys of "the plain people," as Abraham Lincoln was wont to designate the great body of working classes.

There is more than a grain of truth in the adage "Take care of the boys, and the girls will take care of themselves." Do we give as much attention and care to the preservation of our boys as we devote to the safeguarding of our girls? Are not our boys and young men exposed to greater dangers in the battle of life? Are not they more constantly and more fiercely assailed by the enemies of man's salvation, and tempted to the gratification of disorderly passions, to every kind of sinful enjoyment—the end of which is temporal misery and eternal ruin?

Hence, any attempt to draw our Catholic youth away from the evil influences that surround them in the world is worthy of approbation; any book that imparts to young men a word of warning and counsels them in regard to the things that make for their spiritual progress and sanctification, for their temporal welfare as well as for their eternal happiness, certainly deserves the hearty endorsement of a Shepherd of souls.

Such a book is the German work entitled *Hinaus ins Leben* by Father Coelestin Muff, O.S.B., a Benedictine of the famous Abbey of Maria Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

We have based *The Young Man's Guide* on this work—inasmuch as it is an English version of the same—revised, am-

plified, and adapted by us to suit the conditions, circumstances, and requirements of the young men of our own country.

In his preface to *Hinaus ins Leben*, Father Muff says: "*Out into life!* So it is decreed for the young man, who is advancing to maturity; and with Schiller we must add, 'Out into a *hostile* life!'—out into a *struggle*, not only for his material existence and welfare, but much more in behalf of his spiritual and eternal interests.

"To make his young friends in some measure acquainted with this hostile side of life, to point out to them the ways and means to parry the attacks of the enemies of their salvation—this is for a priest, for a pastor of souls, a welcome task.

"It is the aim of our little 'Guide,' in the first place, to furnish a Catholic young man with a correct view of the social and religious conditions of modern life, and to call his particular attention to the forces and influences that are inimical to the preservation of his faith and innocence; it admonishes the young man, on his entrance into the busy world, to put on the '*armatura Dei*' (Ephesians vi. 11), the '*armor of God*'; namely, to acquire, to cultivate, and practise various virtues, such as faith, hope, charity, the fear of God, sobriety, humility, obedience, fidelity, and perseverance; it instructs him, especially, how to fight, how to conquer, in the hardest of battles—that which must be fought in behalf of the virtue of chastity.

"In the second place, our 'Guide' is intended to be a support and encouragement to the young man in all the circumstances of his life, and, in particular, to stand by his side at the parting of the ways, when he has to choose a definite state of life—to give him needful suggestions and counsels at this important period of his career in regard to his vocation. By the grace of God, may this little volume be to our young men truly a lighthouse amid the darkness of unbelief and heresy, a bulwark against the ever increasing flood of immorality, an anchor of

salvation when the soul is threatened with shipwreck, and a star of hope in the gloom of life."

To enhance the practical value of this work, we have added to the *Counsels* and *Reflections* a compilation of *Prayers* and *Devotions*, which, though short, will be found satisfactory for all the ordinary occasions for which a "Prayerbook" is wanted by young men in the world. We certainly desired and planned to add a larger collection of prayers. But this would have made a volume of great bulk, and our young men do not like to carry a bulky book.

To Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Mother of Good Counsel we humbly and respectfully dedicate our little "Guide." May she bless our youthful friends, and pray for them, that they may love and honor Jesus more and more in the Sacrament of His love, that they may learn to know *Him* better, who is "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life,*" and, above all, that they may follow Him and walk in justice, holiness, and truth toward that complete beatitude which is the crown of the saints.

F. X. LASANCE

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Feast of the Assumption
of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1909.

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On the Journey of Life

"Take thou courage and show thyself a man"

— 3 Kings ii. 2.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, do manfully"

— 1 Corinthians xvi. 13.

"The greatest man is he who chooses right with the most invincible resolution; who resists the severest temptation from within and without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully; who is calmest in storms, and most fearless under menaces and frowns; whose reliance on truth, on virtue, and on God is most unfaltering."

— Seneca.

"A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows."

— Wordsworth.

Of manners gentle, of affection mild;

In wit a man, simplicity a child.

— Pope.

"Virtue itself offends when coupled with forbidding manners."

— Middleton.

"Roughness is a needless cause of discontent. Severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate; even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting."

— Lord Bacon

"In simple manners all the secret lies:

Be kind and virtuous, you'll be blest and wise."

— Young

Manhood

1. Manliness

Manliness implies self-control, conscientiousness, moral courage, fearless discharge of duty in the face of obloquy and prejudice, firm determination to do what is right because it is right and pleasing to God, without regard to human respect, expediency, or popularity, a steadfast adherence to one's religious principles and convictions—in a word, an upright Christian character.

> "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power:
> Yet not for power—power by herself
> Would come uncalled for—but to live by law,
> Acting the law we live by without fear;
> And, because right is right, to follow right
> Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."
>
> — Tennyson

"Act like a man; take courage and do; and be not dismayed" (1 Paralipomenon xxviii. 20).

"Do ye manfully, and let your heart be strengthened—all ye that hope in the Lord." (Psalm xxx. 25).

"Behold, I command thee, take courage and be strong. Fear not, and be not dismayed: because the Lord thy God is with

thee in all things" (Josue i . 9).

"If God be for us, who is against us?" (Romans viii. 31).

"He that feareth man shall quickly fall: he that trusteth in the Lord, shall be set on high" (Proverbs xxix. 25).

"I myself will comfort you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a mortal man, who shall wither away like grass?" (Isaias li. 12)

"Who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good?" (1 Peter iii. 13).

Strive to be a manly man! A manly man is a man of character; one who is controlled by conscience; one who does his duty under all circumstances; one who is swayed by reason, by faith, by moral principles—not by every passing impulse, not by transient emotions, not by fancy or caprice, not by human respect. A manly man is one who is endowed with the courage of his convictions; one who is conscientious, sincere, truthful, honest, upright, just and charitable, unselfish and magnanimous, kind and gentle; one who practises what he preaches, whose life is consistent with his faith; one who heeds the admonition of his Creator: "Walk before Me and be perfect" (Genesis xvii. 1); "Thou shalt be perfect and without spot before the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy xviii. 13); one, in fine, who may be called truly a Christian gentleman—who seeks to please God first and always, and then observes the Golden Rule: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (Luke vi. 31).

Vacillation of mind, feebleness of will, unsteadiness of purpose, want of courage, energy, and perseverance—these militate against success in the battle of life, and impede a man's progress in the way of virtue and perfection.

A firm will underlies every good and strong character, and to the lack of it must be attributed much unhappiness and

misery in the world.

Strength of character includes both firmness of will and the power of self-restraint. A man, for instance, who yields to anger, and whose bursts of fury make his subjects tremble, may appear to be strong, as he ruthlessly bears all before him, but he is really weak—pitiably weak. He has not conquered himself; he is mastered by his passions. He lacks self—control, and therefore he is not strong. That man is great, that man is strong, who subdues his feelings, suppresses his evil inclinations, and bridles his passions.

"The patient man is better than the valiant, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities" (Proverbs xvi. 32).

"He is most powerful who has himself in his power." — Seneca.

"He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires, and fears, is more than a king." — Milton.

"There never did and never will exist anything permanently noble and excellent in a character which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial." — Sir Walter Scott.

Father Von Doss, S.J.[1], says: "There are characters so wavering that one is scarcely able to describe or portray them. Now joyous, now sad; sometimes disposed to good; again inclined to evil; at one time impetuous, at another hesitating, in constant agitation, in eternal waves of commotion—their hearts remain even to themselves inexplicable riddles. Such men are tossed on the ocean of life, like ships without rudder or helm.

"Do you not know that it is said of the fool that he is changed as the moon (Ecclesiasticus xxvii. 12), and of the just man that he is an everlasting foundation? (Proverbs x. 25).

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[1] *Thoughts and Counsels for Catholic Young Men*, Von Doss, S.J., adapted by Rev. A. Wirth, O.S.B.

"Alas! for those soft, unstable characters which are capable of being molded at will!

"Who shall discover in such a youth the man of the future? He is full of inconsistencies. In his changeable nature timidity sometimes yields to a spirit of enterprise; coldness, to that of enthusiasm. He is given to violent and easily formed attachments! Although susceptible to virtue, yet evil impressions leave behind in his heart far deeper traces.

"This inconstancy takes such a hold on some, that even their exterior—their looks, carriage, gait, speech, and gestures—bear testimony to it.

"God grant that a young man of that sort may never be approached by a seducer! What an easy prey he would find!

"There are characters so flighty that even God's grace seems inefficacious in their regard. Interior admonitions, salutary inspirations, good example—all these, and even more, produce no effect; for the volatile soul pays no attention to them, refuses to co-operate with them.

"Pitiable characters, who can be transformed into reliable men only with great difficulty and the most indefatigable perseverance!

"Yet such natures are by no means incorrigible.

"No, young man! Despond not! Earnest efforts must be successful.

"First of all, be humble, and acknowledge your inconstancy. Then, endeavor to cope with it in detail.

"Have the courage necessary to keep a strict watch over yourself for a time; and by continually renewing your good resolutions fight against the failings you discover within you.

"Accustom yourself to quiet and reflection. Do not act precipitately nor impetuously. Render an account to yourself of all

that you do.

"Do not permit your feelings to get the upper hand; rather strive to become the master of your own heart.

"Nothing is more disgusting than a sentimental piety.

"Nothing is further from perfection than that external piety which derives its sweetness from the feelings alone.

"Nothing is more inefficacious than a piety which lives only on impressions.

"Of course, there is a sensible devotion, and it is of value: for it is a gift of the Holy Ghost, and may be made an excellent means of virtue. But there is, also, a disposition of the heart—we may call it a sort of dainty piety—which is a great drawback to virtue. It inflates the spirit, and leaves the heart empty. It seizes upon the spiritual tid-bits, while good, substantial food is wanting to the soul.

"Do you know in what manly piety consists? In this—that man's will (which constitutes his manliness) be employed in its full strength for God's honor and glory, in His holy service.

"If a commandment of God is to be kept, it is ready to keep it.

"If a good fight is to be fought for principle and virtue, it is ready for action.

"If a difficulty is to be overcome, it is ready for the task.

"Manly piety does not, by any means, despise or disregard external practices of piety, but it regulates them and brings them in harmony with the duties of one's station in life; it keeps away everything extraordinary, and despising the mere appearance, and insisting more upon the interior spirit, it reaches to the heart. Proceeding to sacrifice, it labors and toils, struggles and conquers.

"Does it appear to you, that too much is required of you

when you are asked to cultivate such manliness?

"Make, at least, the attempt, and begin. 'Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees' (Hebrews xii. 12).

"There are children enough, and plenty of weaklings. Be manly; and, although young in years, put to shame those who call themselves mature, although not such either in thought or deed.

"The world needs men—not grand geniuses or plausible talkers. It is not sentimentality and dreams that will save it, but acts and deeds. It was not merely by revelations and visions that the saints became such, but by spiritual combat, by self-denial, and overcoming the enemies of their souls.

"'Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord' (Psalm xxvi. 14).

"There is only one thing of which a man ought to be ashamed—of evil—to do evil, or to have done it.

"But, miserably enough, he is often ashamed of the very opposite, of avoiding evil and doing good.

"The thought of being ridiculed, blamed, or despised by others, disquiets him; he becomes confused and alarmed; he acts contrary to his better convictions. The inspiration to good is slighted, the favorable opportunity passes—he is overcome—conscience, virtue, God, are surrendered!

"Young people yield easier than others to this false shame, this foolish fear—because their imaginations are so lively, their minds so susceptible to all impressions.

"How many conversions from evil to good, and from good to better, does not this human respect prevent! How much evil does it not cause, how much good does it not frustrate!

"What will they think of me? What will they say to it? They will laugh at me, ridicule me. How can I separate myself from

this, or from that? How can I give up this one or that one? They will think hard of me; it will look odd and singular!

"The whole world is full of such cowards and often those who boast most of their independence are the most pitiful slaves of this mean passion.

"Honor—much-abused word! Does honor consist in cowardly compliance, in a more than untimely readiness to please? in sacrificing conscience? in surrendering our highest and best convictions?

"Has he honor who lies down in cringing servitude—the bond-slave of a word, a jest, a look, a reproach?

"Coward!—for such you are, and as such you are regarded even by those to whom you yield—coward! Why do you suffer yourself to be thus enslaved?

"Are those whom you so much fear your legitimate lords and masters?

"God alone is, by right, your Lord and Master. From Him you have your being; He can take it away from you at his pleasure, whenever He wills—and not they. He shall one day judge you. His good pleasure must be of more value to you than all the displeasure of men. God's displeasure can not be outweighed by all the good pleasure of men.

"'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear: fear ye Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. I say to you, fear Him' (Luke xii. 4, 5).

"Alas! what an insult do you offer to God by preferring man before him! Are you, then, ashamed of God?

"What is more honorable than to serve God? to do His holy will? Is He not the King of heaven and earth? Is He not the best, the highest, the loveliest, and the most beautiful?

"How, if God should, one day, be ashamed of you? If, on the terrible judgement day, He let you perish in your nothingness? If, then, He should deny you, as you deny Him now, if He should refuse to know you? What then?

"'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty' (Luke ix. 26), says the Lord—and He will keep His word.

"Tell me, at least, before whom are you ashamed?

"Before the good and virtuous? Before those who will, one day, come with the saints of heaven to sit in judgement over the world?

"Is it not rather before sinners, evil-doers, perverts, and fools? Yes, indeed—fools. The Sacred Scripture says: 'Fools hate them that flee from evil things' (Proverbs xiii. 19). Yes, indeed—sinners. 'The worship of God is an abomination to a sinner' (Ecclesiasticus i. 32). And again: 'He that walketh in the right, and feareth God, is despised by him that goeth by an infamous way' (Proverbs xiv. 2).

"Are you so sensitive as to the recognition or respect of men? Why, then, do you not labor for the esteem and praise of the just and good?

"Why all these cowardly fears? Is virtue, then, something disgraceful? What has any worth, if not it, and it alone?

"Riches vanish, honors evaporate, pleasures slip away—virtue, valuable in itself, recognized by God, fostered by the noblest and best of men—an object of envy, even to the wicked—virtue remains, reaches even beyond the grave—crowns, and is crowned—reigns in, and for, all eternity! 'They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity' (Daniel xii. 3).

"Can it be possible that you are ashamed of your nature, of

your existence, of your destiny? Unheard-of folly! Is the bird ashamed of flying, the fish of swimming? And is not the service of God your nature, your element, your end and aim? 'Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man' (Ecclesiastes xii. 13).

"You are afraid of being thought singular, odd, queer, peculiar?

"But, are you not aware that, as a virtuous man, you will always be singular, odd, queer, peculiar, in a world of sinners?

"Not to be singular in the sense of the wicked, is to renounce all virtue.

"If you do not walk in the broad way of destruction, you are singular; if you walk in the straight path, and seek the narrow gate, you separate yourself from the vast multitude that rush through the wide portals into everlasting ruin.

"Remain singular! The singular ones go into heaven, whilst the children of the world remain outside.

"Say, young man, what will become of you, if you accommodate yourself to the sentiments and conduct of certain youthful companions? If you praise what they praise, blame what they blame, do as they do? Do they not travel in crowds upon the broad road of sin and sensuality?

"No, you have a conscience; you have your principles, drawn from the Gospel; act according to these, and ask for nothing else.

"It is time for you to become a man; to be, in the fullest sense of the word, manly. You talk and dream so much of self-dependence; where is it?

"Is there question of principles? The loosest are those of the majority; they are favored. Honor, revenge, dueling, suicide, are permissible, or at least excusable, acts. As to morality, if one only avoid the most flagrant crimes, if he but escape talk

and publicity—for the rest, human weakness deserves some indulgence; we are not angels.

"Here, a double-meaning word is spoken,—you remain silent; there, a smutty one—you show no sign of disapproval; again, a vulgar one—you laugh at it. And, in order to avoid all suspicion of narrow-mindedness, one at last joins in, applauds, contributes his share, outdoes—yea, vies with the rudest in nastiness, and thereby purchases for himself among young libertines and low companions the unenviable reputation of being a good fellow—of a young man that knows how to live—who lives and lets live—a liberal, broad-minded young man full of 'go.'

"In the dictionary of worldlings and sinners, intemperance - is excusable weakness; idleness—necessary relaxation; endless, and too often passionate play—pastime; reading of sensual books—culture, knowledge of the world; extravagance—generosity; vanity and affectation—civility; flattery—courtesy; untruth—necessary reticence; ambiguity—prudence; dishonesty—clever calculation.

"'Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter' (Isaias v. 20), for men's sake!

"The slave of human respect is like a puppet, involuntarily performing all the motions which Satan and the world compel it to.

"Pitiful role!—especially for a young man, who should carry his free, noble brow high in the air, and not suffer it to bear the brand of a miserable bondage to creatures!

"Evil companions may sneer at you because you discharge the duties of your station; because you study, labour, and make good use of your time. Answer, I know what I am about!

"They may entice you to carousals, to dangerous amuse-

ments. Say, I will not go with you!

"They may press you to learn the cause of your change of life. Tell them, That concerns me alone!

"They may mock at your altered demeanor. Let them go on; blunt arrows do no harm.

"They may laugh at your conscientiousness. Pity their want of conscience.

"Contradict when and where necessary; have courage; defend yourself. Here defiance is necessary and right.

"The worst thing that could happen to you in this case would be the best—that such people would let you alone.

"Oh, happiness, to be rid of such perverse and false friends, and to be able, at last, to breathe freely once more!

"'Thou hast broken my bonds: I will sacrifice to Thee, the sacrifice of praise' (Psalm cxv. 16, 17), to serve Thee as I must; to love Thee as I can; to be guided only by holy fear, as I should!

"'*Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed*' (Luke ix. 26).

"Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil: neither shalt thou yield in judgment, to the opinion of the most part, to stray from the truth" (Exodus xxiii. 2).

"But if you also suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled" (1 Peter iii. 14).

"For God hath scattered the bones of them that please men; they have been confounded, because God has despised them" (Psalm lii. 6).

"With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed"

(Ecclesiasticus i. 13).

St. Aloysius is the perfect model for all young men in regard to purity and manliness. Pope Benedict XIII named him patron of youth.

Father Rickaby, S.J., commenting on this in *Ye are Christ's*, says: "Our Lord, we may say, has ratified and carried into effect the nomination of his Vicar. St. Aloysius has taken a strong hold on our boys. This seems to be some part of the reward given him of God even on earth, where he renounced so much. Then again every Catholic boy appreciates that virtue which is the chief ornament of his age, the virtue of which Aloysius is so brilliant an example, and whence he derives his name of Angelic. Many also are held to the saint by ties of gratitude; for his intercession on behalf of the young is singularly powerful with God. There are those who ascribe to some devotion done in his honor the settlement of their vocation. On the other hand, here is an authentic story of a boy delivered through St. Aloysius from the calamity of being pushed forward to the priesthood against his will. In a clerical seminary in Italy, about the year 1850, on St. Aloysius' day, the boys used to write letters to the saint, which lay before his statue all day, and then were burned or given back unread. The bishop of the diocese insisted on taking up one of these letters and reading it, to see, as he said, that the boys did not write nonsense. No representations of the Jesuit rector, from whom this story comes direct, could stop him. The letter he happened to get hold of ran to this effect: 'Dear Aloysius, my parents will have me here, because they want me to be a priest: I have no vocation: can you get me out of it?' The thing was settled that day. Furthermore, it is plain to any one who will study his life, that Luigi Gonzaga was a high-spirited, energetic, and courageous boy, with the makings of a soldier or a statesman in him, one quite capable of filling the high position he was born to. The efforts of the Marquis, his father, to retain him, though he

had two younger brothers, Rudolf and Francis, are a testimony to his fitness for being the head of a noble house. People useless in the world are seldom much good in the Church. Heroic sanctity requires high courage. One reason why sanctity is so rare is because high courage is rare. A 'muff' will never make a canonizable saint. A boy's instinct soon discovers that there was nothing of the 'muff' in Luigi Gonzaga."

2. Politeness[1]

"The attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is" (Ecclesiasticus xix. 27).

There is a certain sort of harsh, repellent virtue, and it may be that some souls are called to it.

There is also a pleasant sort of virtue to whose influence it must be credited, if the kingdom of good is extended here below.

How beautifully politeness becomes a well-educated young man! How it increases his amiability, and elevates his morally good qualities, making them worthy of imitation!

If virtue is the precious pearl, politeness of manners is the artistic setting which delights the eye and enhances the value of the jewel.

Politeness and virtue are most intimately connected. Both spring from a common root, self-denial; both have a common enemy, selfishness.

The worldling, in order to please the world, does many things that are not easy, nor to his taste. He molds himself into

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[1] From *Thoughts and Counsels for Catholic Young Men,* Von Doss, S.J., adapted by Rev. A. Wirth, O.S.B.

certain forms, abandons views and inclinations that are near and dear to him, puts restraints upon himself, bears insults, overlooks slights, keeps back what he would like to say, and speaks when he would rather remain silent. He is determined to please every one, no matter at what cost; he must maintain his position, he must rise. Hence, for a miserable pittance or reward he becomes the inglorious victim of vanity, selfishness, and human respect.

Not so with the virtuous man. He, too, makes sacrifices, even a sacrifice of himself, but for the love of God, for a divine reward. Without sacrificing his conscience (which belongs to a higher Lord), he endeavors in all other things to become all to all.

He restricts himself for the sake of others, accommodates himself to their tastes, is indulgent where he can be; he praises what is praiseworthy, and knows how to soften a necessary rebuke by sympathy and friendly interest. Cheerful without excess, he is obliging, affable, polite, without cringing; modest with superiors, benign with his equals, and condescending to inferiors.

O the power of love! O holy violence of self-denial!

Shall not such politeness, arising from such motives, and purchased at the price of such sacrifices, bear on its brows the stamp of genuine virtue?

Is it not as far removed as heaven is from earth, from that artificial whitewash, from that smooth veneering that chills us with its deadly coldness, because it originates from loveless, selfish hearts, and is destitute of all heavenly warmth and unction?

Politeness and urbanity, culture and courtesy, have value only as far as they proceed from, and aim at, charity. If their source is true self-denial, if they rest upon the esteem of the neighbor, as faith teaches us, they are laudable, meritorious,

and pleasing to God.

The eulogy or example of a polite companion, or of an educated man of the world, is neither a sufficient nor worthy motive for cultivating that which, only through faith, is raised from a mere social to a Christian virtue.

Just because genuine politeness originates from charity, and promotes charity, it should be no stranger to you, young man, no matter what vocation or state of life you may embrace. Learn it for God's sake by self-observation, and the observation of educated and refined persons.

You will avoid many faults against charity if you remove what is contrary to good manners. Yes, good manners will even be to your own gain, because through their influence you will learn to treat yourself with a kind of veneration.

Consider it not below your dignity to pay attention to courtesy even in minor things. Dress, carriage, looks, gestures, gait, speech—nothing is to be overlooked.

Even Holy Writ—that most solemn and sacred of all monitors—disdains not to lay down rules of conduct, which are always rules of wisdom, as well as rules of charity. Though these, in general, refer to the whole outward man, they, in particular, regard the most abused of all our instruments of sense, the tongue.

A man is known by his look, and a wise man, when you meet him, is known by his countenance. For "the attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is" (Ecclesiasticus xix. 27).

"The heart of fools is in their mouth: and the mouth of wise men is in their heart" (Ecclesiasticus xxi. 29).

"A wise man will hold his peace till he see opportunity: but a babbler, and a fool, will regard no time" (Ecclesiasticus xx. 7).

"He that answereth before he heareth, showeth himself to be a fool, and worthy of confusion" (Proverbs xviii. 13).

"He that uses many words, shall hurt his own soul" (Ecclesiasticus xx. 8)

"It is the folly of a man to hearken at the door: and a wise man will be grieved with the disgrace" (Ecclesiasticus xxi. 27).

"A fool will peep through the window into the house: but he that is well taught will stand without" (Ecclesiasticus xxi. 26).

"If thou sittest amongst many, reach not thy hand out first of all: and be not the first to ask for a drink" (Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 21).

"Be not hasty in a feast. Use as a frugal man the things that are set before thee" (Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 17, 19)

"Leave off first, for manners' sake: and exceed not, lest thou offend" (Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 20).

Do you, perhaps, believe that good manners or courtesy were a matter of indifference to the Saviour of the world?

Behold the picture which the ancient prophets presented of the Messias!

"He shall not cry; neither shall his voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not be sad nor troublesome" (Isaias xlii. 2-4).

"If any man will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall force thee to go one mile, go with him other two. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away" (Matthew v. 40-42).

"When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place" (Luke xiv. 8); "because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled" (Luke xiv. 11).

"Have no strife amongst you as to which shall be first; for the great ones of earth do this. He who is the greatest among you, let him be as the least: and he that is leader, as he that serveth" (Luke. xxii. 26).

"Be natural as children" (Matthew xviii. 3). "Be wise as serpents, and simple as doves" (Matthew x. 16).

And did not the apostles teach the same?

"Render to all their dues: fear, to whom fear, honor, to whom honor" (Romans xiii. 7).

"Communicating to the necessities of the saints, pursuing hospitality" (Romans xii. 13).

"Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep" (Romans xii. 15).

"If it be possible, as much as you can, have peace with all men" (Romans xii. 18).

"Let your modesty be known to all men" (Philippians iv. 5), that all may be edified by your good conduct.

"We are a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Corinthians iv. 9).

How easily may courteous manners, ennobled by a modest reserve, dispel the popular prejudice against virtue, and awaken in the rudest and most vicious mind a strong desire to imitate him who is none the less a Christian because he is a polished gentleman!

3. Cheerfulness

St. Paul admonishes us: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice!" (Philippians iv. 4). And the prophet Habacuc sings: "I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in God my Jesus. The Lord God is my strength and He will make my feet like the feet of harts; and He, the conqueror, will lead me upon my high places singing psalms" (Habacuc iii. 18, 19). There is an apostolate of *cheerfulness* as well as of prayer and of preaching by word and example. Like a sweet, fragrant flower by the roadside, whose bright loveliness is a joy to every one who passes by, our cheerfulness is a blessing to all with whom we come in contact. A young man, merely by being cheerful, exerts a quiet yet potent influence for good. Let us bear this in mind, that we can be helpful to souls, that we can encourage them and strengthen them in good by our cheerfulness and amiability. The author of *The Art of Being Happy*[1] tells us: "It is well to do our duty, but sometimes this is not enough for the happiness of others and our own. We must do our duty with joy, with eagerness, with love. We must not keep count of what we do, nor stop strictly and sternly at the exact limit of duty. Let us learn to devote ourselves generously, above all when there is question of fulfiling certain obligations of our state, position, etc., by which we do good to our brethren. Let us learn to show always a smiling face, although our work is distasteful to us or overwhelms us. And after having worked hard let us take care not to recall in conversation the pains we have taken, the fatigue that we have imposed

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[1] Translated from the French by the Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J.

upon ourselves. Then our duty accomplished will please every one: God first, then men, and last of all our own poor heart."

Our Lord Himself has said: "Be of good cheer!" And He said this substantially many times. Jesus was indeed a man of sorrows, but He was not a sad man. His face must always have reflected the serenity of His soul. He was meek and humble, gentle and amiable. "He went about doing good to all."

From the Gospel narrative we can glean that Jesus possessed a cheerful temper, serenity mingled with tender seriousness, a most engaging presence, and a winning personality. Children came to Him willingly and loved to linger near Him, and how can any one imagine Him embracing and caressing little children without a smile of loving-kindness? Men followed Him in crowds, fascinated by His charm of manner and of speech. And into woman's heart came the thought: What happiness to be the mother of such a son!

Among the saints—the close followers of Christ—St. Francis de Sales pre-eminently commands our admiration and our love for his Christlike characteristics of cheerful serenity, meekness, humility, patience, charity, kindness, sweetness of temper, and suavity of deportment. Like Our Saviour, the gentle Bishop of Geneva loved to make use of comparisons drawn from nature to illustrate his sermons, which are so replete with good cheer and helpfulness.

As we read in the introduction to "The Mystical Flora of St. Francis de Sales": "In this he holds a place peculiarly his own. His images do not recall scenes of Cappadocian gloom, like those of St. Basil, nor, like St. Jerome's, the harshness of the desert. But rather, as the clear blue waters of the lakes of his own Savoy soften without distorting the rugged outlines of the overhanging hills, which they reflect bright with sunshine, gay with flowers, and crowned with teeming vines, so does his gentle spirit present to our minds the loftiest doctrines in all the grandeur of truth, and yet clothed in images of beauty that

charm the fancy while they flash new light upon the understanding. But most of all is this true of him as he comes in from the garden with comparisons gathered from the flowers that bloom therein." The spiritual comparisons of St. Francis drawn from plants and flowers make clear to us "how one may draw good thoughts and holy aspirations from everything that presents itself in all the variety of this mortal life."[2]

Ornsby, in his life of the saint, says: "There appears in the mind of St. Francis de Sales that union of sweetness and strength, of manly power and feminine delicacy, of profound knowledge and practical dexterity, which constitutes a character formed at once to win and subdue minds of almost every type and age. As the rose among flowers, so is he among saints. From the thorny, woody fiber of the brier comes forth that blossom which unites all that can make a flower lovely and attractive; and from the hot and vehement nature of the young Savoyard came a spiritual bloom, whose beauty and fragrance were perfect in an extraordinary degree. All things that command respect and attract love were found in St. Francis."

And this explains his power as a spiritual guide, his mighty influence over sinners, his success as a peacemaker, and his helpfulness to all with whom he came in contact.

As followers of Christ, and in imitation of the saints, let us cultivate the habit of cheerfulness and pray for the spirit of gladness, which is rooted in charity, in the peace of a good conscience, in gratitude to God for His blessings, in Christian hope and confidence in perfect submission to the divine will; and let us do this not only for our own good, but also for the happiness and betterment of others.

Every life is meant
To help all lives; each man should live

[2] Devout Life, pt. ii. c. xiii

For all men's betterment.

Alice Cary.

"*Servus servorum Dei*," "Servant of the servants of God," is one of the titles of the Pope. The Prince of Wales has borne for his motto "*I serve*," since the fourteenth century. In a way we are all one another's servants. St. Thomas Aquinas says: "That wherein one man excels another man is given him of God that therewith he may serve other men." Our blessed Saviour tells us of Himself: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew xx. 28). At the Last Supper He washed His apostles' feet, saying to them: "I have given you an example." His example and His teaching are that the highest must not disdain the lowest, and that all are to serve all. Now we can all serve or help others by our cheerfulness and amiability. A cheerful person creates a wholesome moral atmosphere around him, and exerts an invigorating influence upon his environment.

There is great merit also in cheerfulness, when it is cultivated from a supernatural motive, when it is the fruit of divine and fraternal charity. It requires self-control and self-denial to maintain cheerfulness under all circumstances—in sickness, in pain, in sorrow, in poverty, in misunderstanding, and in unpleasant surroundings. Christian cheerfulness implies something more than natural temperament; it means self-denial—self-control. Natural disposition should not be offered as an excuse for being morose and rude. By the grace of God and with an earnest effort we can overcome our evil nature. You find yourself refreshed by the presence of cheerful persons; why not make earnest efforts to be helpful to others by your own cheerfulness and amiability? Strew the road with flowers for others, and in turn your own pathway will be scattered with roses.

Montaigne says: "The most manifest sign of wisdom is con-

tented cheerfulness, and it is undoubtedly true that a cheerful man has a creative power which a pessimist never possesses."

A merry heart goes all the day;

A sad tires in a mile.

Lew Wallace tells us: "A man's task is always light if his heart is light," and there is wisdom in the Spanish proverb: "Who sings in grief procures relief."

The presence of a good and cheerful man acts like an invigorating tonic upon all around him. Nothing disturbs his equanimity, which springs from the peace of God in his heart. The author of *The Imitation* says: "The joy of the just is from God and in God, and their rejoicing is in the truth. If there be joy in the world, truly the man of pure heart possesses it. Rejoice when thou hast done well."

Father Dignam, S.J., says in his *Retreats*: "All discouragement comes from pride. Failure has nothing to do with pleasing God. A soul who fails and makes an act of contrition twenty times in the day will probably have given God more glory, and done more for Him, than one who has gone quietly on all day without failure; God created some people (it may be said) to serve Him by failure; for they give Him glory by their acts of contrition and humiliation, while if they had succeeded, their pride would have made them displeasing to Him."

The thought of heaven and of that blessed time when we shall see God in the fulness of His beauty ought to keep our hearts overflowing with peace and joy. We can be always bright and cheerful if we keep our eyes directed toward the eternal shores, to the blessed land of the saints, where the sky is ever cloudless, where the sun of happiness never sets, where a perfect torrent of delight inundates the soul, where, as the beloved disciple tells us, "God shall wipe away all tears, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away."

Apropos of this subject, Father Henry Calmer, S.J., of blessed memory, who for many years filled the pulpit of St. Xavier's, Cincinnati, and held vast audiences spellbound by his eloquence, wrote the following lines while visiting a Trappist monastery:

Eternity

The silent monks prayed in their oaken stalls;
In the tangled grass by the abbey walls
Bloomed the roses red with their drooping leaves,
And roses pink as the dreams youth weaves,
And roses white as when love deceives;
How they bloomed and swayed in the garden there,
While the bell tolled out in the warm still air:
"Eternity"
"Eternity!" The great bell rang.
"Leave life and love and youth," it sang;
And the red rose scattered its petals wide,
And the pink rose dreamed in the sun, and sighed,
And the white rose pined on its stem and died.
O Life, Love, Youth! Ye are sweet, ye are strong,
But barren lives shall bloom in a long
Eternity!

Where peace and interior joy abound there also cheerfulness of mien and manner ought to be found. Happiness presupposes peace, a threefold peace: Peace with God, peace with

ourselves, and peace with our neighbor. That man is happy who lives in peace.

In the holy night when our Saviour was born, the angels sang: "*On earth, peace.*" On the eve of His Passion, Our Lord said to His disciples in His touching farewell address: "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.*" And after the Resurrection, He greeted His followers repeatedly with the words: "*Peace be to you.*" Peace must be a great blessing, a priceless treasure; it is indeed happiness.

The Church prays for peace daily in the Canon of the Mass. "*Dona nobis pacem!*" is the third petition of the "*Agnus Dei*," "Give us peace!" And in the beautiful prayers before communion the Church again asks for peace. "*Pax huic domui!*" "Peace be to this house!" the priest says on entering a sickroom to administer the last sacraments. "*Pax!*" is the simple device of the illustrious Order of St. Benedict, in connection with the watchword: "*Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus!*" "That in all things God may be glorified" This is substantially the same as the chant of the angels: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus!*" "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will!" To seek God's glory means peace and happiness to man. His glory and our happiness are inseparably united. This is man's destiny, as the little catechism teaches: "To know God, to love Him, to serve Him, and to be happy with Him forever." This is true philosophy: Man tends naturally to happiness as his last end, "a state of freedom from all evil and enjoyment of every good that can be desired, joined with the certainty of its everlasting duration."

In this world real happiness consists in the peace and joy of a good conscience and in the hope of an eternal reward which springs from a well-spent life. "In the next world," as Archbishop Meurin says in his *Ethics*, "happiness consists in the fullest knowledge of the infinite truth, which is God Himself, in the most ardent love of the supreme goodness and beauty,

which again is nothing else but God, and in the perpetual possession of supreme bliss, which consists in everlasting friendship and union with God."

The will of God, then, is this, that in the present life, in whatever circumstances divine Providence may place us, we live virtuously, avoiding evil, and doing good.

Peace with God implies the state of grace, a good conscience, submission to and fulfilment of the divine will. Peace with self implies the mastery over one's passions, the consciousness of duty well done, the approval of one's conscience. Peace with one's neighbor implies the commandment of love, the observance of the golden rule: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (Luke vi. 31). This threefold peace is the basis of happiness. A cheerful Christian gentleman is a rebuke to the world, whose votaries make it a matter of reproach against religion that it sends men to learn the solemn lessons of the grave and casts a blight upon life, that meditation on the eternal truths tends to stifle endeavor, to paralyze our energies, and to sadden our days. Religion really tends to gladden our hearts and to make our days calm and tranquil.

"Rejoice in the Lord always!" We ought always to be cheerful, and our joy should find expression in deeds of kindness and helpfulness to all with whom we come in contact. We ought to heed the words of Our Lord to His followers: "Be of good cheer!" Life today is so strenuous that there is constant need of relief from its strain, and a sunny, cheerful, gracious soul is like a sea breeze in sultry August or like a "draught of cool refreshment drained by fevered lips."

The author of *The Floral Apostles*, referring to the crocus and the primrose as the emblems of cheerfulness, says: "Cheerfulness furnishes the best soil for the growth of goodness and virtue. It is also the best of moral and mental tonics. 'A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by grief of

mind the spirit is cast down' (Proverbs xv. 13). 'A joyful mind maketh age flourishing: a sorrowful spirit drieth up the bones' (Proverbs xvii. 22)."

We can all acquire greater cheerfulness by assuming the right mental attitude toward our environment and circumstances, by looking habitually at the bright side of things, by training ourselves persistently to see the good and pleasant things in our common, daily life.

Some persons seem to have eyes only for the disagreeable things that happen to come into their life; they forget or overlook their blessings, and brood over their trials and misfortunes.

The soothing line in "The Rainy Day," "Behind the clouds is the sun still shining," does not comfort them. Stevenson says:

"Two men looked out through their prison bars;
The one saw mud and the other stars."

Let us learn to look at life not to find misery and discomfort in it, but to find goodness, gladness, and beauty. The author of *The Art of Being Happy* relates the following anecdote: "A poet was gazing one day at a beautiful rose-tree. 'What a pity, said he, 'that these roses have thorns!' A man who was passing by remarked: 'Let us rather thank our good God for having allowed these thorns to have roses.' Ah! How we also ought to thank God for the many joys and blessings that He grants us in spite of our sins, instead of complaining of the slight troubles that He sends us."

"A doctor who has made a specialty of nervous diseases," so we read, "has found a new remedy for the blues. His prescription amounts to this: 'Keep the corners of your mouth turned up; then you can't feel blue.' The simple direction is: 'Smile; keep on smiling; don't stop smiling.' It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Well, just try turning up the corners of your mouth,

regardless of your mood, and see how it makes you feel; then draw the corners of your mouth down, and note the effect, and you will be wiling to declare 'there's something in it!' "

A good suggestion in regard to any past trouble or humiliation is this: "Let it go!" "Forget it!" An optimist writes: "If you had an unfortunate experience this last year, forget it. If you have made a failure in your speech, your song, your book, or your article, if you have been placed in an embarrassing position, if you have been deceived and hurt by one whom you looked upon as a friend, if you have been slandered and abused, do not dwell upon it, do not brood over it; forget it! There is not a single redeeming feature in these memories. Do not make yourself unhappy by keeping on the walls of your heart the pictures of vanished joys and faded hopes. Forget them. Count your blessings. Be of good cheer."

As regards those faults of our neighbors that irritate us, it will help us to be more cheerful and amiable if we remember our own shortcomings, which they have to endure. St. Paul admonishes us: "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians vi. 2). Do not look for mistakes or faults to censure in others; let us rather look for an excuse for our brethren; let us admire their virtues and imitate them.

The author of *The Art of Being Happy* says: "There is a word which can not be said too often to every Christian whom God has destined to live, converse, and labor in the society of his fellow-creatures: *Be indulgent*. Yes, be indulgent; it is necessary for others and it is necessary for your own sake. Forget the little troubles that others may cause you; keep up no resentment for the inconsiderate or unfavorable words that may have been said about you; excuse the mistakes and awkward blunders of which you are the victim: always make out good intentions for those who have done you any wrong by imprudent acts or speeches; in a word, smile at everything, show a

pleasant face on all occasions; maintain an inexhaustible fund of goodness, patience, and gentleness. Thus you will be at peace with all your brethren; your love for them will suffer no alteration, and their love for you will increase day by day. But, above all, you will practise in an excellent manner Christian charity, which is impossible without this toleration and indulgence at every instant."

In conclusion, then, let us resolve to be cheerful and amiable at all times and under all circumstances. By keeping this resolution we shall glorify God, gain much merit ourselves, and be a blessing to others.

4. Kindness

"Let us be kind if we would promote the interests of the Sacred Heart, of which kindness was the special characteristic. Let it not be in isolated acts—'few and far between'; no, it must be like prayer—an *habitual disposition* of heart, which is ready to manifest itself without any effort, at all seasons and in all circumstances, and thus it will be with hearts which are united to that Heart of love. Kindness will flow from them, as it were, naturally, just as the flowers give forth their perfume, the birds their song, and as the sun shines down alike on good and bad as it goes on its daily circuit—because all this is of their very nature. In the most trivial things of daily life the spirit of kindness should render itself evident....

"Kindness is as the bloom upon the fruits—it renders charity and religion attractive and beautiful. Without it, even charitable works lose their power of winning souls; for without kindness, the idea of love, the idea of anything supernatural—in a word, of Jesus—is not conveyed to the mind by the works performed, even though they be done from a right motive. There is such a thing as doing certain exterior actions, which are intended to be charitable, ungraciously. Now, actions thus performed do not manifest the kindness of the Heart of Jesus, nor will they be efficacious in extending the empire of His love, or in winning souls to His kingdom. The fruit may be sound, but the bloom is not on it; hence it is uninviting....

"How many a noble work has been nipped in the bud by the blast of an unkind judgment; how many a generous heart has been crushed in its brightest hopes by a jealous criticism; how

many a holy aspiration, destined to bear abundant fruit for God and souls, has been forced back into the poor heart from whence it had ascended, there to be stifled utterly and forever, leaving that heart, as the poet so graphically represents it, 'like a deserted bird's nest filled with snow,' because unkindness had robbed it of that for which, perhaps, alone it cared to live. How much, then, we may believe has been lost to the world of all that is good and great and beautiful through the instrumentality of unkindness; and if it be thus, what developments, on the other hand, may we not expect, in the order of grace as well as of nature, in the hearts and minds of men beneath the genial sun of kindness.

"Even in the common things of life, and in the natural order, how striking are the results of the passage of this Heaven-sent missioner, this angel of light and consolation.

"If we reflect upon it, kindness is but the outcome and exemplar of the divine precept: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*. There is nothing we personally so much appreciate as kindness. We like others to think of us kindly, to speak to us kindly, and to render us kindly actions and in a kindly manner. Now, we should know how to put ourselves in the place of others, and thus we should testify to them that kindliness that we value so much ourselves.

"When our divine Lord came down upon earth, He came not only to save us by shedding His blood for us, but to teach us by His example how to co-operate with Him in extending the Kingdom of His Father. And one of the most powerful means which He employed for this purpose was kindness, gentleness, and forbearance. 'The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared' (Titus iii. 4), by which words we learn that kindness is not altogether synonymous with goodness, but, as it were, a luster, a bloom, an attraction superadded to it.

"We might regard this sweet reflection from the Heart of

Jesus from many points of view, but it is especially under one aspect that we have been considering it; namely, as a powerful weapon in our hands for the efficacious exercise of our apostolate. Kindly thoughts of others will be productive of prayer in their regard, at once fervent and affectionate—prayer such as the loving Heart of Jesus willingly listens to; kindly words and deeds will draw souls to the love of Him whose spirit they behold so attractively reproduced in His members. As the wood-violets give forth their perfume from beneath the brushwood that conceals them from view, telling us of their unseen nearness, so kindness reveals to us the nearness of Jesus, the sweetness of whose Spirit is thus breathed forth.

"Such is the kindness which is that great missioner sent by the Heart of Jesus to exercise an apostolate of love upon earth, and so to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls." — *The Voice of the Sacred Heart.*

Thoughts from Father Faber on Kindness

The worst kinds of unhappiness, as well as the greatest amount of it, come from our conduct to each other. If our conduct, therefore, were under the control of kindness, it would be nearly the opposite of what it is, and so the state of the world would be almost reversed.

✠

Kindness is the overflowing of self upon others. We put others in the place of self. We treat them as we would wish to be treated ourselves. We change places with them.

✠

Kindness adds sweetness to everything.

✠

Of great consequence is the immense power of kindness in bringing out the good points of the characters of others.

✠

A kind act has picked up many a fallen man who has afterward slain his tens of thousands for his Lord, and has entered the Heavenly City at last as a conqueror amidst the acclamations of the saints, and with the welcome of its Sovereign.

✠

Kindness has converted more sinners than either zeal, eloquence, or learning; and these three last have never converted anyone unless they were kind also. In short, kindness makes us Gods to each other. Yet while it lifts us so high, it sweetly keeps us low. For the continual sense which a kind heart has of its own need of kindness keeps it humble.

✠

Kindness is infectious. One kind action leads to another. Our example is followed. This is the greatest work which kindness does to others—it makes them kind themselves.

✠

A proud man is seldom a kind man. Humility makes us kind, and kindness makes us humble.

✠

A kind man is a man who is never self-occupied. He is genial, he is sympathetic, he is brave.

✠

If a man *habitually* has *kind thoughts* of others, and that on supernatural motives, he is not far from being a saint.

✠

There is one class of kind thoughts which must be dwelt upon apart. I allude to *kind interpretations*. The habit of not judging others is one which is very difficult to acquire, and which is generally not acquired till later on in the spiritual life.

✠

Now, the standard of the *Last Judgement* is absolute. It is this —the measure which we have meted to others. Our present humor in judging others reveals to us what our sentence would be if we died now. Are we content to abide that issue? We ought to cultivate most sedulously the habit of kind interpretations.

Men's actions are very difficult to judge. Their real character depends in a great measure on the motives which prompt them, and those motives are invisible to us. Appearances are often against what we afterward discover to have been deeds of virtue.

✠

What mistakes have we not made in judging others! Have we not always found in our past experience that on the whole our kind interpretations were truer than our harsh ones?

How many times in life have we been wrong when we put a kind construction on the conduct of others? We shall not need our fingers to count those mistaken upon.

✠

Kind words are the music of the world.

✠

We must say something about *kind suffering*. Kind suffering is, in fact, a form of kind action. With the Christian, kind suffering must be almost wholly supernatural. There is a harmonious fusion of suffering and gentleness effected by grace, which is one of the most attractive features of holiness. What is more beautiful than considerateness for others when we ourselves are unhappy?

✠

To be subject to low spirits is a sad liability. Yet, to a vigorous, manly heart, it may be a very complete sanctification. What can be more unkind than to communicate our low spirits to others, to go about the world like demons, poisoning the foun-

tains of joy? Have I more light because I have managed to involve those I love in the same gloom as myself? Is it not pleasant to see the sun shining on the mountains, even though we have none of it down in our valley? Oh, the littleness and the meanness of that sickly appetite for sympathy which will not let us keep our tiny Lilliputian sorrows to ourselves! Why must we go sneaking about, like some dishonorable insect, and feed our darkness on other people's light? We hardly know in all this whether to be more disgusted with the meanness, or more indignant at the selfishness, or more sorrowful at the sin. The thoughts of the dying mother are all concentrated on her newborn child. It is a beautiful emblem of unselfish holiness. So also let us hide our pains and sorrows. But while we hide them, let them also be spurs within us to urge us on to all manner of overflowing kindness and sunny humor to those around us. When the very darkness within us creates a sunshine around us, then has the spirit of Jesus taken possession of our souls.

✠

Rightly considered, kindness is the grand cause of God in the world. Where it is natural, it must forthwith be supernaturalized. Where it is not natural, it must be supernaturally planted. What is our life? It is a mission to go into every corner it can reach, and reconquer for God's beatitude His unhappy world back to Him. It is a devotion of ourselves to the bliss of the Divine Life by the beautiful apostolate of kindness.

✠

Let us conclude. We have been speaking of kindness. Perhaps we might better have called it the spirit of Jesus. What an amulet we should find it in our passage through life if we would say to ourselves two or three times a day these soft words of Scripture: "My spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb" (Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 27).

5. The Correct Thing[1]

FOR MEMBERS OF CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

It is the correct thing: For members of church associations to comply with the rules and regulations.

To be present if possible when meetings are called.

To have a certain amount of humility in regard to one's own ability.

To always withdraw at once from any organization which is not working in harmony with the pastor of the parish.

To refuse to accept an office if one is not willing and able to discharge its duties.

To remember that everybody can not be first.

To approach holy communion on the regular communion days in a body.

It is *Not* the Correct Thing: To belong to any society or organization which is not approved by the pastor.

To refuse a contribution (to the Church or for a Church festival) in a discourteous manner.

To give a donation as if conferring a personal favor on the one who solicits it.

To preface one's donation by the remarks that Father Blank is always begging; that Father Blank-Blank, the former pastor,

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[1] From *The Correct Thing for Catholics,* by Lelia Hardin Bugg. Benziger Brothers.

thought of something besides money; that one would be glad to get into a parish where there were no debts, and where priests preached on the gospel instead of money—money all the time.

To head a subscription list with a large contribution to some charity enterprise when one's pew rent and church dues are unpaid.

THE CORRECT THING IN BUSINESS

It is the Correct Thing: To act as a gentleman in a business transaction, no matter how far his associate may forget himself.

To be scrupulously honest because it is right to be so, and not because "honesty is the best policy."

To remember that all rich men are not knaves nor all poor ones angels.

To make the best of one's opportunities.

To remember that a life need not necessarily be a failure because it is not crowned with wealth.

To be punctual to the second in keeping a business appointment.

To remember that a five minutes' delay has sometimes turned the tide of a young man's destiny.

To devote one's business hours strictly to business and one's time of recreation to something else.

To pay a good man what his services are worth, and not merely the minimum at which they can be obtained.

To avoid all misrepresentation in a business transaction.

To receive every one courteously, whether rich or poor.

To give a reproof, where necessary, in private.

To remember that a frowning demeanor does not always imply a dignified one by any means.

To hold one's word as sacred as one's bond.

To avoid all transactions that are classed in lump as shady.

To remember that adulation to power and arrogance mark a plebeian in mind as well as in origin.

To be manly at all times.

To remember that ill-gotten gains will turn the downiest couch into a bed of thorns a the hour of death.

To remember that everybody admires a manly man.

THE CORRECT THING FOR A CITIZEN

It is the Correct Thing: For a citizen to remember that he owes a duty to the community in which he lives.

To know the difference between statesmanship and political wire-pulling.

To remember that a trickster holding office is a standing reproach to the community which permitted his election.

To let love of country be second only to love of God.

To know that the very least a loyal son of his country can do is to cast his vote for good men.

To contribute cheerfully to all public enterprises.

To remember that a bad Christian never made a good citizen.

To answer in the negative Scott's immortal question:

> Breathes there a man with soul so dead
>
> Who never to himself has said
>
> This is my own, my native land?

It is *Not* the Correct Thing: For a man to think that he can rightfully live only for himself.

To claim the benefits of citizenship, and to shirk its burdens.

To think that rights have not their corresponding obligations.

To imagine that it is unworthy of a gentleman to take an interest in politics.

To think that a man entitled to the ballot, who holds aloof from the polls and then talks about political corruption, is not partly to blame for such a state of affairs.

THE CORRECT THING IN CHURCH

It is the Correct Thing: To always be in time for Mass and other services in the church.

To remember that the church bells are rung for a purpose and not merely to keep the sexton busy, and that it would be well therefore to obey their call.

For every member of a parish to rent a pew or at least a seat in the parish church.

To take holy water upon entering the church.

To make the sign of the cross on the person and not in the air.

To genuflect on the right knee and to have it touch the floor.

To remember that the King of kings is present on the altar, and to order one's conduct accordingly.

To avoid whispering, laughing, and looking about in church.

To walk gently up the aisle it one is unavoidably detained

until after the services have begun.

To make a short act of adoration on bended knees after entering the pew.

To be devout and recollected at the different parts of the Mass.

To remember that mere bodily presence in the church, with the mind wandering to temporal concerns, does not fulfil the precept of hearing Mass.

To pay attention to the sermon, and make it the subject of one's thoughts during the day, as also during the week.

To remember when special collections are to be taken up, and to have a contribution ready in your hand.

To make a practice of putting *something* in the contribution-box every Sunday. To train children to this practice.

To listen to the music as a means of elevating the heart to God.

For a gentleman occupying a pew to move in or rise and let ladies pass in before him.

For pew-holders to offer seats in their pews to strangers.

To be punctilious in following the ceremonials of the Church—standing, kneeling, etc., at the proper times.

For Catholics to keep away from Protestant services.

To take an earnest Protestant to hear a good sermon.

To remain kneeling until the last prayers have been said and the priest has retired to the sacristy.

It is *Not* the Correct Thing: To be late for Mass or any church service.

To stalk hurriedly and noisily up the aisle.

To ignore the holy water font at the entrance.

To make the sign of the cross as if fanning off flies.

To give a little bobbing curtsy, instead of the proper genuflection, before entering one's pew.

To whisper, laugh, or cause any distraction to those around.

To deliberately turn around, stare up at the choir, or at those entering the church.

To go to sleep, or read during the sermon.

To be in an ecstatic condition of devotion when the contribution-box approaches.

To forget all about the special collections for the orphans, the church debt, the Pope, etc.

For a person occupying the end seat to scowl forbiddingly at all those who seek to enter the pew.

To kneel on only one knee, or to emulate the position of the bear when saying one's prayers.

For members of the congregation to find fault with the sermon, criticize the clergyman, and retail gossip on their way home from church, as is done in China and other places in the Orient.

It is the Correct Thing: To be willing and ready at all times and under all circumstances to give the reason for one's religious beliefs when asked to do so by a sincere seeker after truth.

To avoid argument merely for the sake of argument.

To say nothing needlessly to wound the feelings and religious opinions of those out of the Church.

To refute calumnies against the Church when they come under one's notice.

To be firm always in one's adherence to the teachings of the Church, even at the risk of giving offense to others outside her

pale.

To remember that "a liberal Catholic," in the sense in which the term is usually understood, is often no Catholic at all.

To remember that example is more powerful than precept.

To understand that whilst it would be wrong for a Catholic to go to a Protestant church, it is not wrong for a Protestant to go to a Catholic church, simply because it is one of the fundamental doctrines of all Protestant denominations that religion and religious opinions are very much a matter of private interpretation of the Bible; that two persons may belong to one church and yet not both believe exactly the same thing, and that all churches are alike pleasing to God in proportion to the sincerity of their members. In brief, that the Catholic Church forbids her children to participate in religious services outside of her pale, and the Protestant churches leave their members to do as they please in the matter.

It is *Not* the Correct Thing: To be careless about what one says, and the use of expressions calculated to give offense.

To weakly agree to slanders on the reputation and integrity of the Church or her ministers.

To manifest surprise and impatience at the failure of any one to grasp a truth that seems so plain to oneself.

To imagine that because one can not see a truth it is therefore not so.

For a Catholic to say that one Church is as good as another; for every intelligent Protestant knows that a consistent Catholic can not think so, and that a Catholic who says he does is telling a deliberate falsehood.

To act in any way that would bring reproach on the Church or give scandal to those either in or out of the fold.

At the Parting of the Ways

In life's bright morn I see thee depart
I see thee go with a trembling heart;
Farewell, dear Youth, so joyous and free,
God's blessing ever abide with thee.

When thou dost stand where the ways divide
May thy Angel-guardian be at thy side;
God grant thou may'st choose the narrow way,
And from it may thy footsteps never stray.

"Wenn Du am Scheidewege stehst,
Und **Pflicht** und **Wunsch** den Kopf verwirren,
Du wirst im Pfad nur selten irren,
Wenn Du den Unbequemsten gehst."

— F. W. WEBER, **Gedichte**.

Whither Goest Thou?

1. The Decision

Let us suppose that you are on a walking tour in a neighborhood as yet unknown to you. You come to a spot where one road leads straight before you, another to the right, and a third to the left. Is it not very important for you to know which of these three roads you ought to take in order to reach the desired goal?

You have really set out on a pilgrimage like this; for your whole life is nothing but a journey to heaven. You may possibly have already reached the crossroad, or will reach it before long; you must come to a decision, and enter upon one of these paths in life.

But which are you to choose? Life in the world, especially the *marriage state*, the *priesthood*, or the *religious life*? All these roads have one and the same goal—they all lead to heaven. But each has its own special and peculiar difficulties, so that not all who walk along these paths reach the goal with equal facility and with the same happiness.

Those who are really qualified to tread the path they have chosen, will reach their goal easily and happily with the help of God. When you arrive at the parting of the ways it is of the highest importance that you should choose the right way, that

is, the state of life destined for you by God. Lay well to heart the momentous character of this decision.

The three states mentioned above, life in the world, or matrimony, the priesthood, or the religious life, are the only vocations, properly so called; certainly doctors, lawyers, tutors, tradesmen, artisans, farmers, and so on, apparently represent so many different vocations, to make use of an expression commonly in vogue.

But these are really no vocations in the proper sense, for they impose upon those who embrace them no essentially different obligations, as in the states of matrimony, the priesthood, and the religious life; they are simply trades, occupations, professions, distinct positions in life. Now as regards the three states or vocations, properly so called, God, whose wise providence guides and orders all things, bestows upon each individual human being an immortal soul with all the special aptitudes and capabilities which are required to lead him to the goal which he is destined to reach. When, therefore, a young man has arrived at the parting of the ways, there sounds in his ear more or less plainly, sometimes within his own heart, sometimes from an exterior voice, the call of God: "I have destined you to be the father of a family; I have thought to lay upon you the dignity and burden of a priest; I desire to see you lead a pious life within the walls of a convent."

Thus does the call of God sound in the ears of all men in innumerably different ways. One hears the call in his own heart from his childhood days; another hears it for the first time when the moment of decision arrives. God calls one suddenly by some extraordinary event, others again, and the greater number, by the force of circumstances and environment.

How immensely important therefore it is to recognize and follow this call of God. God made man to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven; this is the final goal and highest end of all men!

The commandments also are the same everywhere and for all men; but it is not everywhere and for all men equally difficult to keep these commandments. Therefore every state is not for every one, and every one can not reach heaven with the same facility in every state.

If you are not destined for life in the world, for matrimony, you will scarcely be able to save your soul in the married state, or will only succeed in doing so with great difficulty. On the other hand, if you are called to the matrimonial state, to re-

main unmarried would place a great obstacle in your heaven-ward way.

And if it be the will of God that you should enter a Religious Order, it would be difficult for you to work out your salvation in the world.

Therefore St. Gregory of Nazianzen says: "He who makes a mistake as to his vocation will fall from one error to another all his life long, and at the end of it may possibly even find himself deceived as to his hope of heaven."

It is easy to see the reason which lies at the root of this. If a young man refuses to follow the clear call of God, because to do so would involve a sacrifice, he forfeits many graces.

You have as yet perhaps not reached the parting of the ways, and years may elapse before the moment for a decision arrives You may already be filled with anxious dread lest you should make a wrong choice, and wreck your prospects of happiness. But fear not, be of good courage! There is a sure and simple means of choosing aright. In the meantime be truly chaste and pious, and your choice cannot fail to be a happy one.

Many are the ways that here
Lead unto a higher sphere:
One thy God has traced for thee,
Best and safest that will be.

2. Good Advice

When a parish priest, a director of souls, surveys the young people belonging to his flock, he asks himself with a heavy heart the important question: "What will become of all these who are dear to me?" A similar inquiry forces itself upon me in regard to the youthful readers of these pages. And in regard to you, who are perusing this chapter, I ask myself whether you, well meaning as you are at present, will always remain virtuous, be happy, and get to heaven at last.

I can not tell; I can only wish it with all my heart. But one thing I do know, that it will go well with you, and that you will in all probability save your soul, if you embrace the state of life for which you are destined by God.

Therefore it is incumbent on me to do everything in my power in order to help you to make a wise choice. Therefore lay well to heart the good advice which I am now about to offer you, in view of such a choice.

My first piece of advice is: take counsel of yourself. But you must do this calmly, without prejudice. Your heart should resemble a delicately balanced pair of scales; you must weigh all things fairly. You must not try to discover where and how you can most speedily grow rich and enjoy the vanities and amusements of the world. A young man who should take counsel of himself in such a fashion as this, and look at things from a purely material point of view, without reference to God and to his eternal salvation, would be greatly in danger of making a bad choice. Therefore I beseech you not to expose yourself to any such risk.

Take counsel with yourself in such a manner as will enable you to say to God in a spirit of resignation: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. I desire nothing but what is Thy will. If only I can do Thy will it is a matter of indifference to me whether I am rich or poor, whether happiness or sorrow is my portion, whether my life is full of work or spent in ease and without exertion. All this is of no consequence, if only I can please Thee, O my God, and save my soul in the end."

In this resigned frame of mind examine yourself; review your characteristics, peculiarities, and inclinations, good and bad; think over your past; notice what are your passions and temptations; consider the strength or weakness of your will. Then compare with all this the duties, difficulties, and dangers of the state of life upon which you purpose to enter. If you feel compelled to say to yourself: "When I remember the weakness of my will and the force of the temptations which assail me, I do not think that I am capable of fulfiling the duties of that state, or of overcoming the difficulties which it presents," it becomes plain that this road to heaven is too steep for you.

Consider your case as you would that of a friend who had similar faults and the same inclinations. One is usually more unprejudiced in regard to others than one can hope to be if the matter under consideration is of a personal nature. Why should you not feel the same affection for yourself as you do for a friend? Why should you not take counsel with yourself in the same manner in which you would seek to advise him? Ask yourself the question which St. Aloysius was wont to put to himself whenever he was obliged to come to an important determination: "How does this look in the light of eternity?" or "What does this count for eternity?"

Act in respect to yourself as you will wish you had done when you come to lie upon your death-bed. There can be no safer rule than this. For in the presence of death matters are viewed in their true light, and no longer seen through colored

glasses. How extremely foolish it would be to embrace a state of life which would furnish cause for bitter repentance in your last hours!

My second piece of advice is: Take counsel with others. But who is to counsel you, and to whom ought you to listen? Here great caution is necessary; there are counselors who present themselves unasked, and to whom it would be wrong to listen. On no account lend your ear to bad Catholics, to persons who have no faith or who have not a good reputation. In regard to the supernatural their understanding is either darkened or extinguished altogether; the eyes of their mind are blind as far as the eternal truths are concerned; how, then, could they advise others, how point out to them the right road to heaven? There are yet other counselors to whom it would be most inadvisable to listen. I mean worldly persons, who are entirely absorbed in material things. For higher interests they have no perception; their thoughts are set upon nothing else but money, honors, and pleasures. Persons of this class usually deplore the entrance of a young man into a Religious Order.

Nor ought you to listen to the advice of those who have anything to gain or lose from your choice as regards the goods of this world. Finally, do not be advised by persons who know nothing about the state of life that you may be thinking of adopting, as, for instance, the religious state. Their ignorance imbues them with the most absurd ideas and vehement prejudices, in regard to such a state of life. How could they form a correct judgment?

From whom, then, are you to seek counsel? Holy Scripture exhorts you: “Keep continually to a wise man, who fears the Lord.” It is very important to remember this when the choice of a state of life is under consideration. And why is it so? Because he who desires to give good advice must often offend this or that individual with regard to whose temporal interests the results of his advice may prove to be prejudicial. If counsel

is sought from persons who fear man rather than God, what misery may not be the consequence of following their advice, since in giving it they view things from a purely human standpoint. As a rule, your natural advisers, given you by God, are your parents. But there are exceptional cases in which they rank among the evil counselors I have enumerated above; and in these instances their advice can not be relied upon.

Under all circumstances your best adviser is plainly your confessor. You ought not only to ask his advice, but faithfully to follow it. He knows you as no one can know you, except God alone; he knows your good and bad qualities and inclinations. Therefore do not, in your youthful folly, be influenced by the fear that his advice will not coincide with your own wishes. Rather give thanks to God that you have at least one friend whose intentions are pure, whose motives are disinterested, and who will be able to prevent you from taking a false step. Consult your confessor and follow his advice; it will be for your good. The Holy Ghost refers to the priest, the confessor, when He exhorts you in the words I have quoted above: “Keep continually to a wise man, who possesseth the fear of the Lord.”

3. Effectual Means

The right choice of a state of life is certainly a great desideratum, since it is a matter of so much consequence in relation to your success and happiness. In order to make a happy choice, follow the good advice offered you in the preceding chapter, and make use of the *effectual means*, which I am about to point out to you.

In the first place, keep your heart constantly directed toward heaven. Have but one desire, namely, to know and to do the will of God. God will then bestow his grace upon you, and you will be certain to make a wise choice. No one ought to wait for an extraordinary call, such as the apostles and many great saints received. However, if you keep your heart constantly directed toward God, He will enlighten you with His grace. He will give you prudent counselors, and so ordain external circumstances that you may be led as if by the hand of your guardian angel to the state of life God intends for you.

Truly the ways of God are wonderful and manifold. Sometimes He impresses on the heart of a young child a desire for a particular state. Consequently, later on in life there can arise no question as to making a choice, the question having already been decided. To others He signifies His will only when a choice has to be made; and these often enter with joy of spirit into a state for which they had long experienced a rooted aversion.

In the second place, keep your soul pure. Very much—everything, indeed—depends upon this. The brighter and more transparent is the glass of a window, the more readily do the

rays of the sun penetrate into the room; but the dimmer the glass, the darker will the apartment be. The soul may be compared to glass, to a mirror, into which the beams of divine grace shine, and in which they are reflected. If you desire to be enlightened from on high in your choice of a state of life, keep your heart clean, preserve therein the bright light of innocence. If this light is obscured or extinguished by sin, delay not to rekindle it by means of contrition and confession.

In the third place, be diligent in prayer. From what has already been said you must plainly perceive that prayer is of the utmost importance in choosing a state of life. For, on the one hand, you seek to choose the state of life which will best promote your eternal salvation; on the other, the world, the flesh, and the devil strive to decoy you into taking the wrong road.

There are two epochs in the life of every individual when the devil lays snares for him with particular cunning. The first is when he ceases to be a child; then comes the crisis, the critical period when the result of previous training will show in the innocence and purity of the youth or maiden, or the reverse be unhappily the case. I believe this critical period has already passed with you; I confidently hope you have successfully stood the test and preserved your innocence.

But with yet greater cunning and force will the devil attack you either now or a few years hence when you come to choose a state of life. Should he succeed in inducing you to take the wrong road, he will expect to emerge victorious from your final, death-bed struggle. Therefore, my dear young friend, pray, pray! Pray for light, that the mists may disperse and the road of life stretch clearly before you; pray for strength to resist your passions whatever sacrifices it may cost you; pray simply that you may know and do the will of God.

In the fourth place, receive frequently and worthily the sacraments of Penance and of the Altar. These sacraments will maintain the purity of your soul, and the Giver of grace will

descend into your heart with His light and strength. After each communion entreat Our Lord, with earnestness and confidence, to teach you what are the designs of His Sacred Heart in regard to you, and to strengthen you to make any sacrifice that may be necessary. And on your communion days give some time to serious reflection. Imagine that you are stretched upon your death-bed. Ask yourself if you were in that awful hour what state of life you would wish you had chosen. Would it not be a cause of bitter regret if you had acted in accordance with your own self-will, instead of following the advice of your confessor?

I can not refrain from mentioning one more means for arriving at a right decision, namely, a true, filial, confiding love and devotion to Mary. On the present occasion I will only make two brief remarks in regard to this devotion. If you desire wisdom and enlightenment concerning the choice of a state of life, the surest way to obtain it is through Mary, for she is "*Sedes sapientiae*," the "Seat of wisdom." And if you wish to attain eternal salvation in the state which you may choose, the surest way to realize this is through Mary, for, as a great saint tells us, "a true servant of Mary can never be lost."

Do not imagine that thoughts like these are suited only for a young man who is about to enter the cloister. These reflections are not intended for this one or that one, but for all who desire to choose aright so as to insure their eternal salvation.

As you ought to beware of rashness in choosing a state of life, so you ought to guard against over-anxiety. Do not lose heart in presence of the momentous decision. Make use of the means I have pointed out to you; look constantly toward Heaven. Keep your soul pure; be diligent in prayer; frequently approach the sacraments; practise devotion to Mary; regard her as your Mother; and look with cheerful confidence into the future. Eternal peace and joy follow the earthly struggle. The way of the cross leads to the crown of immortal glory.

Gentle Star of Ocean!
Portal of the sky!
Ever virgin mother
Of the Lord most high!

Break the captive's fetters;
Light on blindness pour;
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a mother;
Offer Him our sighs,
Who, for us incarnate,
Did not thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins!
To thy shelter take us!
Gentlest of the gentle!
Chaste and gentle make us.

Still, as on we journey,
Help our weak endeavor;
Till with thee and Jesus
We rejoice forever.

The Married State

1. Ought you to Marry?

All three states of life, namely, the Priesthood, the Religious state, and the Married state, are, as I have frequently remarked, ordained by God; but every state is not for every one, and it is not a matter of indifference in the sight of God which state is chosen.

The reason why I speak here of the married state in the first place is simply because a very large majority of young men are called to this state, and also because it is usually the first which is considered. We now proceed to ask the first decisive question: are you called to the married state? Ought you to marry?

The answer to the question, "Ought you to marry?" depends upon another question: "Do you think yourself capable of fulfiling the duties of the married state?" In order to answer this question, you must learn what these duties really are, and I will now proceed briefly to set them before you.

One of the chief among these duties requires that husband and wife should live together in concord, love, and conjugal fidelity until death. They must remain together, since marriage is indissoluble. Only when it pleases Almighty God to sever the bond by taking husband or wife out of the world may the survivor marry again.

How should married people live together? First of all, in peace and harmony. They should aim at the same goal, and strive after one and the same thing. For this end they must be united, avoiding anger, quarreling, and dissension.

The following apposite anecdote may be related here. Two married persons who lived unhappily together carried their dispute one day so far as to come to blows. A neighbor who heard what was going on suddenly shouted: "Fire! Fire!" The quarrel was forgotten; husband and wife eagerly inquired where the fire was burning. "In hell," was the unexpected reply, "and thither married people must go who persist in living in enmity, anger, and dissension." The lesson to be drawn from this is that married people should live together in love and harmony, not in strife and discord. They should seek to please one another, they should pray for one another, and bear with one another. And they should live in conjugal fidelity, that is, they should keep the solemn promises made to one another at the altar.

Another important duty is that of mutual edification. They should edify one another by a Christian life; they should set one another a good example, they should seek to sanctify one another, so as finally to reach heaven. This is the most lofty aim, the highest goal of a union which a sacrament has rendered holy.

Just as Christ loved His own, not merely until His own end, but in such a way as to enable them to attain their final goal, which is eternal felicity, so must the husband love his wife in such a manner that they may both attain their final end, eternal blessedness. Therefore they should pray together, together attend divine service, and receive the sacraments.

Married people have another important duty: they must bring up their children in the fear of God.

At the day of the last judgment we who have the care of

souls do not fare like private individuals; we have not merely to answer for what we have personally done or left undone, but when we have given an account of this, we shall be asked about the condition of those who have been entrusted to our care.

In the same manner shall fathers and mothers be judged, not only in regard to what their own lives have been, but also as to the manner in which they have brought up their children. This duty in regard to the proper training of children ought of itself to suffice to cause you, if you are a young man thinking of matrimony, to reflect very seriously, and not to answer the question: "Ought I to marry?" with thoughtless haste in the affirmative.

But when, and under what conditions, may the reply be an affirmative one? In order briefly to sum up everything, I say to you: If you have reached a suitable time of life, if you are at least twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, if you are sound both in body and mind, if you are not afflicted with any hereditary disease; if you have a fair prospect of being able, in the pursuit of your calling, to maintain a family, if you possess the requisite endowment and capacity to fulfil the difficult duties which devolve upon parents, and to be the head of a well-ordered household, and if you think that you can preserve your chastity and promote your sanctification better as a married man than as a bachelor, then you ought to marry. But on the other hand, it would not be right to refuse to found a family merely from love of a free and comfortable existence. May God enlighten and direct you; may God bless you.

The selfsame faith and mutual love.
The selfsame hope for joys above,
Such bonds alone in wedded life
Will joy secure, and banish strife.

2. The Companion of Your Life

If you have reached a suitable age, and feel yourself called to the married state, then are you confronted with the most important affair—namely, that of seeking and selecting the partner of your life.

Then the momentous inquiry presents itself: Whom ought I to marry, with whom ought I to commence a courtship, and to what ought I principally look? I will now endeavor to reply to these questions, and to furnish you with a few practical hints.

In the first place, look for genuine piety, modesty, intelligence, and common sense. A woman must necessarily possess true piety; without this she is unfit to make a man happy, or to bring up children properly. It is quite certain, however, that a young woman is destitute of real piety, no matter how frequently she may go to church, if she is guilty of disobedience, impertinence, untruthfulness, and duplicity in regard to her father and mother; or if she has a loose and biting tongue, from which no one is safe.

Beware of marrying such a one; most probably she would be the same in regard to you as she is in regard to her parents and other persons. Furthermore, if a girl is conspicuously vain, indulges her pride, dresses in an immodest and unseemly manner, is excessively fond of frequenting picnics and dancing places, and is not ashamed to parade her real or imaginary charms even in the house of God and during divine service, or if she seems in a tremendous hurry to get married—such a one could never satisfy you; she would never make you happy.

Do not allow your choice to depend altogether upon minor considerations, such as physical beauty, finished manners, a charming deportment, wealth, and worldly possessions.

Physical beauty ought not to decide. When I say this I am far from meaning that you ought to marry a deformed or ugly person, or one in regard to whom you feel from the outset a repulsion or aversion. No, certainly not; but undue importance must not be attached to beauty, because it offers no security for a happy marriage.

"A beautiful body," says St. Chrysostom, "which is not the dwelling of a virtuous soul can hold a husband captive but for a very short time." And the same holy Doctor of the Church writes in another place: "How many husbands have come to a deplorable end, although their wives were possessed of remarkable beauty; others, on the contrary, have led a very happy life, and attained to a ripe old age, at the side of a wife possessed of but little physical attractiveness."

Worldly possessions, property, and money ought also to be a minor consideration in regard to the choice of a wife. Money need not be left altogether out of the question; but it is plain that he who looks only to the dowry marries not the individual but the money. To such a one may fitly be applied the saying of the holy Doctor we have just quoted: "It seems as if the wife were to be bought. Such conduct dishonors the gift of God, and treats a holy sacrament as if it were an ordinary transaction."

I chanced to read of an instance of this style of transaction in a newspaper the other day. A very wealthy man wanted to get a son-in-law still richer than himself. He met with a young man to suit his ideas and proposed to give him, in the event of his marrying his daughter, a very handsome sum as her dowry. The gentleman, however, who probably loved money more than he loved the girl, demanded a still larger sum. The squabble which ensued was a long one; at length the bargain was satisfactorily concluded, and the marriage took place. The

young lady does not appear to have been more sensible or noble-minded than her parent, or else she would have said to him, "Father, you can do with your money what you please, but this sordid fellow shall not have me! I want a husband who wishes to marry *me*, not my *money*!"

If money ought not to play a principal part, it is, as a rule, desirable that your betrothed should stand on nearly a similar footing with yourself in regard to property; in any case she ought not, by means of an enormous dowry, to make a rich husband out of a poverty-stricken creature. For believe me, there would then be the greatest danger of her making of you a henpecked husband, and that in accordance with the saying, "Money rules the world," she would try to rule you; there would be breakers ahead in the sea of life.

Whom, therefore, ought you to marry? A person endowed with those qualities which will enable you to attain, in common with her, the end for which God has intended you, in your particular state of life. Therefore seek a bride who, as has already been explained, is truly pious, modest, intelligent, and sensible; who, moreover, thoroughly understands housekeeping, and takes pleasure in it; one who is thrifty, economical, neat, and careful; one who sees that everything is properly done, and who does not shirk taking part in household duties herself.

Finally, see that your betrothed is about on the same level with yourself in regard to age and education. Remember the well-known lines of Schiller:

Heart with heart together meeting,
See they are in concord beating;
Life is long, and passion fleeting.

3. The Time of Courtship — "Company-Keeping"

You are aware that it behooves you at all times to watch and pray, and keep strict guard over your innocence, but never is this so necessary as during the time of courtship. That is the most dangerous time for young people. If they forget God, the period of their engagement often witnesses the ruin of their innocence, their peace of mind, the happiness of their life.

This topic is consequently among the most important for those whose office it is to instruct young men and give them practical advice for their guidance in moral and spiritual matters. Let me tell you plainly what a Christian young man ought to think about courtship, and how he ought to conduct himself during that period.

A Christian young man ought to seek to know betimes what is allowed and what is forbidden in regard to courtship. He ought not to wait to know this until he has fallen deeply in love, and perhaps even made improper proposals. In this case the eye of his conscience would be dimmed; it would be impossible for him to judge aright.

For those who have already sinned together, warnings usually come to late; persuasions, entreaties, exhortations, are equally thrown away; if such persons were to see the abyss of hell yawning before them, or if some one were to rise from the dead in order to warn them, they would continue to pursue their evil way, saying it was impossible for them to desist from it.

Therefore, I say to you, before entering upon any courtship learn what is the right view to be taken in regard to company-keeping. But what is this right view? Careless persons who enter upon a courtship are ready to assert that company-keeping is nothing bad, but rather something beneficial and useful, since it is the necessary preliminary for marriage.

To this it may be replied, that under certain conditions, courtship is nothing evil, but profitable and permissible; but how few courtships there are which fulfil these conditions, and which do not appear to be dangerous and even sinful?

Father Schuen says in regard to this subject[1]: Young people of opposite sexes fall in love with each other, get engaged to be married, and not unfrequently remain in that state for a very long time, sometimes for years. Over this state of things heaven has reason to mourn and hell to rejoice. How so, you may ask, is there anything wrong in keeping company with a person that you intend to marry? I answer that in itself there is nothing wrong in keeping company, but that the time and other attendant circumstances very frequently convert it into a proximate occasion of sin, and that it can become very wrong. Love-affairs are frequently very lightly entered into; but they are often attended by great dangers and sad consequences.

That two persons who intend to get married should previously become better acquainted with each other is reasonable and right; in fact, ordinary prudence and the future happiness of the two demand as much. If they meet at times, provided they do not remain alone too much and especially at night, and then enter the married state in a proper and legitimate manner, such acquaintance can not be found fault with. But in many cases there is no prospect, or only a very remote one, that marriage will follow; at times there is not the slightest intention of marriage between the two that keep company. Or,

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[1] *Outlines of Sermons for Young Men,* Schuen-Wirth

when there *is* an engagement of marriage, they are constantly together; they are averse to the presence of other persons; they prefer to sit for hours in the dark; they wander about in secluded and out-of-the-way places; they are at every dance that is held for miles around. The Christian code of morals can never sanction such company-keeping. Such a method of courtship is fraught with the greatest dangers and generally constitutes a proximate occasion of sin.

Holy Scripture condemns this. "Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? Or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (Proverbs vi. 27, 28.) "Are you," asks St. Augustine, "more masters of yourself than David, or wiser than Solomon? Now, if too familiar intercourse with women, and the seduction of their caresses were the ruin of these great men, how will it fare with those who purposely seek such familiarity with the opposite sex, who perhaps live in the same house with them and frequent every amusement in their company?"

St. Jerome calls illicit acquaintances the "death-agony of a moribund chastity."

Even that mildest of moralists, St. Francis de Sales, points out the great danger of undue familiarity: "These erotic friendships evoke so many temptations, dissipations, and jealous feelings, not to speak of other things inimical to the peace of the soul, that the better feelings of the heart are completely crushed and destroyed by them." St. Alphonsus, the prince of moral theologians, says: "I maintain as a general principle, that it is a matter of great difficulty for any one who keeps up an intimacy of this kind to preserve himself from a proximate occasion of sin."

The same conclusion becomes evident if we consider the frailty of human nature. We know that the heart of man is prone to sin. Through the fall of our first parents a great misfortune came upon them and their posterity. Man has become

exceedingly weak; the door of the heart is always open to evil. St. Paul testifies to this: "I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is, in my flesh, that which is good. I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members" (Romans vii. 18, 23). The human heart is especially prone to the sin of impurity. A single look, a single grasp of the hand, is sufficient to awaken the fire of passion. Witness the case of David (2 Kings xi. 2 seq.).

Ask yourselves now whether there is anything wrong in these familiar associations with persons of the opposite sex. They are dangerous in the highest degree. Two young persons by nature most frail meet frequently in the twilight or the dark, in solitary places; the passions are enkindled, flames are unchecked; and you ask is there any danger! If the hermits of the desert with all their prayers and austerities, with their diet of roots and vegetables, could subdue nature only by hard struggles, what is not to be feared when it is a question of two lovers, who perhaps seldom pray and practise little if any self-denial? They will not stop short of the greatest sins if they continue their illicit company-keeping.

The ordinary consequence of dangerous familiarity is a multitude of sins. The river of iniquity that flows from them is not a single stream, but forms many most destructive currents. In the first place we must mention impurity. Indulgence in love-affairs, carried on without safeguards, results almost inevitably in violations of chastity. He who puts his hand into the fire is burned; he who scrambles over a thorny hedge tears his clothes; he who casts himself into the mire will be soiled; and he who keeps up an undue intimacy with a woman will fall into grievous sins. Experience proves only too well the truth of this statement. If such a one does not go astray at first, he will fall into sin all the surer as time goes on. At the outset they will indulge in silly conversations, then love becomes a passion and

the understanding is darkened; and when passion obtains a firm foothold the will forms a thousand evil desires; sinful words and unchaste deeds not unfrequently follow.

Another evil is the grief which is caused to the parents. How much grief, how much sorrow, parents endure on account of the misdeeds of their children! Their sons and daughters do not obey them, they scorn their advice and admonitions. The parents foresee only too clearly the end of the dangerous entanglements which their children have gotten into, and they mourn over them in bitterness of soul. Often these associations lead to theft. The young man goes into excessive expenses to make presents to his "company," he wants to dress above his means, to take his "company" to dances and amusements; his income is not sufficient and the deficiency must be supplied from his father's coffers. These intimacies lead to scandal. The young couple live on a footing of intimacy, they are seen together almost daily, and yet months and years go by without marriage. People suspect easily that things are not right, and in many cases there is good reason for the suspicion.

Another evil that follows is frequently a desecration of the sacraments. Full and open confessions of guilt are frequently not made; a feeling of shame keeps the couple from declaring their sins as they should. Such confessions are sacrilegious and so also is the communion which follows. Or, if they confess their sins, they are not willing to remove the proximate occasion of sin; they go from one confessor to another; they leave his admonition unheeded, give a half-hearted promise to avoid the occasion, without a firm will to do so. The absolution is nothing but empty words that can never remit sin. Thus the sacraments are profaned for years, and the mysteries of the Faith are abused in the most shameful manner.

Intimacies of this kind cause many tears. Sins are always a source of sorrow, but this is especially true of sins of impurity. They bring with them evils not only in the matter of eternal

salvation, but even in a temporal way. Disgrace often falls upon those persons guilty of such sins. As the man grows older, he looks back with deep regret at the years spent in contempt of the law of God. On his death-bed they become a source of anguish and fear.

Not unfrequently such young men die suddenly, and have no time for repentance; they have filled the measure of iniquity, and are called to give an account of their doings. Others become hardened in vice and never repent. They are plunged into the abyss, and mourn their sins for all eternity.

These dangerous intimacies bring on consequences bitter as the sting of a serpent; they are attended by great dangers and sad consequences. I have not overdrawn the picture; I have spoken nothing but the truth. Make no excuses to palliate the danger of which I have spoken today. Experience shows that the reality is, if anything, worse than I have pictured it. I made the proper allowance. There is no fault to be found with company-keeping within certain limits. Where there is an earnest intention of marriage, and the engagement is not of too long duration, and the visits are made to the family, and proper hours are kept, there can be no objection. What I condemn, and what every Christian must condemn, are the courtships without reference to marriage, the intimacies protracted for years, the visits where the young people are together for hours and alone. These are nothing but proximate occasions for sin and often a living in habitual sin. For persons living so there can be no hope of absolution in the confessional which is valid before God unless they abandon the occasion. If you are carrying on an acquaintance of this kind, I beg of you, if you love God, if you love the salvation of your own soul, break it off at once. Do not answer that you have done nothing wrong as yet; if you continue you can not remain free from sin. Cut off the hand that scandalizes you, pluck out the eye that is a source of sin and cast it from thee. Make a generous resolu-

tion now, and God will sustain you with His grace. If you do, you will always bless the day on which you conquered yourself.

Each state and calling here below
Has its own joy and its own woe;
Yet sorrowful beyond the rest
A marriage that God has not blest.

4. Marry a Catholic

As regards the choice of a wife, I have another, and a very important point to mention, namely: *Marry a Catholic*; on no account conclude a mixed marriage; therefore avoid engaging yourself to a non-Catholic.

First of all it must be remarked that no offense to Protestants is intended when Catholics are warned against marrying them. Protestants ought to hold similar opinions, looking at the matter from their own point of view, and, indeed, they frequently do. To prove the truth of what has just been said, I will give two extracts, the first from a Protestant newspaper; they are fraught with useful lessons for Catholics. My first quotation runs thus:

"A mixed marriage is always a sad mistake, and any one who forms such a union must make up his mind to experience a good deal of trouble and unhappiness. If the children are brought up as Catholics, the Protestant husband or wife must look on while they say their beads, must hear them invoking the saints, and must tolerate other practices and devotions which are distasteful and annoying to Protestants. If the children are Protestants, discontent and reproaches are sure to follow on the Catholic side; and if some are brought up as Catholics, others as Protestants, the family is divided."

Parents and children ought to profess the same faith. A Protestant artisan who had married a Catholic, and whose only child died, expressed himself as follows: "Standing beside the death-bed of our child, I felt how great a gulf separated my wife from me. In my opinion, mixed marriages are very de-

plorable." Truly, no one who cares about his own salvation and that of his children ought to contract a mixed marriage.

My second quotation is taken from a pamphlet entitled, "A Word of Warning to Protestants." It runs thus: "How unhappy a wife must be, who has been brought up a Catholic, and reflects, every time she attends divine worship, that her children are being educated as Protestants. And the opposite case is just as painful. Nor do I think that the religious discussions which must arise between husband and wife can be very edifying. These discussions can scarcely be avoided if each is in earnest in regard to his or her beliefs. And if religion is to be a forbidden subject, what will become of the children?"

A Catholic priest could not much better or more forcibly express his disapproval of mixed marriages than do these extracts from Protestant sources. Listen to the decision of the Catholic Church concerning mixed marriages. She has always declared her disapproval of them, and advised, nay commanded, Catholics to avoid contracting them. More than fourteen hundred years ago, several Councils, among them those of Elvira, Laodicea, and Chalcedon, forbade Catholics to marry heretics, unless the latter promised to become Catholics.

Two special reasons induced and compelled the Catholic Church to come to this decision. In the first place, a union between a Catholic and a Protestant can never be a perfect marriage, can never be what marriage ought to be. For marriage is a sacrament, and ought to be regarded and treated as such. How can this be, when the Protestant considers marriage to be a merely civil contract?

Married people should live in the closest union, the most perfect harmony; they ought to have but one heart and one soul. How can this be, when they hold such widely different opinions in regard to the most sacred and important of all subjects, namely religion?

Moreover, married people ought to help one another on the way to heaven. How can they do this when one takes the road to the right, and the other treads the path which turns to the left? Furthermore, married people ought to give their children a religious education, and they should co-operate in carrying on the good work. Again, I ask, how can they do this, when their views in regard to religion differ so widely?

Finally, there is another important reason: Mixed marriages are extremely seldom happy marriages. Upon this subject a learned theologian writes as follows: "There is perhaps not one single instance to be found of a mixed marriage in which (although they may have lived peaceably together) the husband and wife did not, after the lapse of years, express the conviction that it would have been better for them had they never met. There was a flaw in their mutual relations, a sore spot, which could never be healed."

Therefore be warned in time, and resolve never to court a young woman who is not of your faith, that you may thus never contract a mixed marriage.

Though love may clasp the nuptial band,
Yet wedded bliss no storm can stand,
Unless the selfsame faith both share
And make God's service their first care.

The Priesthood

1. The Call to the Priesthood[1]

"Neither doth any man take the honor to himself but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Hebrews v. 4).

The priesthood is so sublime a state that no one should embrace it without a clearly known vocation to it.

No, no man takes this honor to himself but he that is called by God, as Aaron was.

A negative inclination for this holy state would certainly not be sufficient. You feel no disinclination to it; it does not appear impossible to you to fulfil its chief duties—celibacy especially; you imagine yourself free from certain violent temptations; you are not destitute of the necessary talents. Is that all that is required for a vocation to the priesthood?

Much less might that be considered a call to it, which rests purely upon exterior reasons or worldly motives.

It is much to be desired that you become a priest. Pious de-

[1] From *Thoughts and Counsels for Catholic Young Men*, Von Doss, S.J., adapted by Rev. A. Wirth, O.S.B.

sire! if the honor of God is its sole object, if it be subordinate to the will of God.

Priests are the representatives of God upon earth. They form a separate state. The Lord is their portion (Psalm xv. 5), and their duty consists in being a chosen generation to the Most High (1 Peter ii. 9), and in helping men to reach their eternal destiny.

The vocation of priests is to heal, to pray, and to offer sacrifice.

They cleanse men from the stains of the soul; they educate them for heaven; they fulfil, in regard to the erring, the duties of the Good Shepherd; they pour oil and wine into the wounds of the soul; they give refreshment to weary mortals; they assuage suffering and impart strength.

They praise God in their own name and in that of all the faithful; they make supplications, they give thanks, they petition for new graces and blessings.

They celebrate the most sublime mystery of the New Law and daily offer up to the Eternal Father the immaculate Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, in expiation of their own sins and those of mankind, and for the obtaining of innumerable graces and blessings.

They are God's coadjutors (1 Corinthians iii. 9); they are the ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians v. 20); they are the dispensers of the mysteries of Christ (1 Corinthians iv. 1):

They are saviours of souls.

To save souls! O sublime work! O work most acceptable and glorious to God! God's own work!

O heart of the priest, large as the universe, high as the heavens, restless as fire, glowing with the love of the apostles, thirsting like the Saviour's heart—who can conceive thy longing desires, hopes, sufferings, joys, struggles, and triumphs!

By reason of his vocation, the priest is obliged to a much higher degree of perfection than the rest of the faithful.

As he excels the latter in dignity, so it is becoming that he should by far excel them in nobility of soul and in sanctity of life.

He is the salt of the earth. Woe to the salt, if it lose its savor (Matthew v. 13), for then it is unfit for seasoning.

He is a light. Woe to the light that proves to be an *ignis fatuus*! Woe to the light that is extinguished, or hidden under a bushel!

He is the city of God, set upon a mountain (Matthew v. 14). Woe to the mountain that is so surrounded by mists and vapors, that the city on its top is lost to the sight of the expectant pilgrim!

If souls are committed to the priest's charge, and if he is to lead them to heaven, he must surely walk himself in the way of salvation.

If he is to educate mankind in spirituality, he must certainly labor unceasingly at his own spiritual perfection.

How dare the curse of sin adhere to the hands that have been made especially to bless?

Shall the mouth which is to announce the words of life be the mouth of one spiritually dead?

Shall the priest's actions contradict the word of edification, and pull down instead of building up?

You ask for the marks of a true vocation to the holy priesthood?

First, pay attention to the preliminary conditions:

Do you possess the necessary talents? Erroneously, or rather, almost blasphemously, it is asserted, sometimes, that

anything is good enough for God. Hear what He Himself says on this point: "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is an angel of the Lord of hosts" (Malachias ii. 7). And do you suppose that the priestly eloquence, by means of which the Holy Ghost speaks to the faithful, can exist without a solid, scientific foundation?

Is your life spotless? A youth spent in purity is, of course, the best recommendation; yet, on the other hand, penitents are not excluded from the priesthood—penitents, that is, such as have expiated and are still expiating the transgressions whereby they once criminally desecrated their youth; penitents, who, after having long since, and most energetically, renounced their evil habits, prepare themselves by a pure present for a still purer future, and leave no means untried to grow and advance in virtue and holiness.

As regards the marks themselves, there are very many; the greater the number you possess, the more certain your call.

Is your intention a perfectly pure one? Do you seek in the priesthood God, your own and your neighbor's salvation, and nothing temporal—such as honor, prosperity, ease, comfort? Is it God, above all, that urges you to embrace this state? Have you heard this call repeatedly?

Do you perceive an interior urging to this holy state? Does the thought of your future priesthood calm and refresh you?

Is the honor of God really dear to your heart? Have you a lively desire to save souls?

Do you find pleasure in spiritual things? Do you love prayer, the sacraments, spiritual reading, intercourse with pious and spiritual persons?

If you are truly called to the priestly state, that is, to a life of sacrifice, how is it you are not able to make a sacrifice of evil in

yourself, to give up a favorite sin, to overcome a favorite inclination?

Prove yourself—aye, prove yourself very seriously. From almost all other states one may recede; but here, there is no return; once bound, you are bound forever. Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech.

Blessed you, if you are called to re-enforce the sacred phalanx which gives to the Church militant her heroic champions and leaders in the battle!

Once more: the call must come from above. This is the only legitimate gate to the fold of Jesus Christ, of which it is said: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, is a thief and a robber" (John x. 1).

Yes, young man, God must call you. Woe to him who intrudes uncalled into that holiest of states, in which the sacrilegious intruder not only does no good, but effects, alas! an infinite injury to himself and others!

O terrible utterance of the Eternal Truth: "Every plant which is not planted by God shall be rooted up" (Matthew xv. 13), since it brings forth no fruit; it is useless in itself and to others: it is fit only to be cast into the fire and to be burned. Pray, pray fervently that you may know and do the will of God.

'Tis Thy good pleasure, not my own,
In Thee, my God, I love alone;
And nothing I desire of Thee
But what Thy goodness wills for me.
O will of God, O will divine,
All, all our love be ever Thine.

To Thee I consecrate and give
My heart and being while I live;
Thou, O my God, alone shalt be
My love for all eternity.
May heaven and earth with love fulfil,
My God, Thy ever-blessed will.

The Religious State

1. The Happiness of a Religious Vocation

I should not consider that I had entirely completed the task I set myself in writing these pages, were I not to add a few words concerning the religious state. In many countries the present time is certainly not favorable to it. Religious are harassed, persecuted, and chased out of the quiet retreats they have chosen for themselves. These persecutions are, however, quite unable to stifle the sublime vocation to the life of the cloister. The vital sap which circulates so abundantly within the Church produces continually, in this direction also, fresh buds and blossoms. And it is in the peasant, artisan, and industrial classes, youths are ever and again to be found, whom the voice of God calls, and forcibly impels to enter the hallowed precincts of the cloister. What are we to think concerning this vocation to the religious life? Lay to heart in the first place the happiness of such a vocation.

The judgment of the short-sighted world is entirely false when it imagines the life of a Religious to be joyless, melancholy, depressing, more or less unhappy. The monk must indeed renounce much which men regard as pleasure and enjoyment, but only to be compensated a hundred-fold by higher and purer joys. Have you ever seen a vine pruned? The process

seems to hurt the vine and bitter drops, like tears, ooze from the stem; yet it proves to be for its good, and increases its value. Thus it is with a Religious. All the sacrifices which he has perchance to make do but augment his happiness; they increase that peace which, as Christ says, "the world can not give." And the same divine Redeemer gives this assurance to those who serve and follow Him: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light."

Consider attentively another remarkable utterance which the Saviour spoke. When St. Peter asked: "Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee. What therefore shall we have?" Jesus answered and said: "Amen, I say to you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting" (Luke xviii. 29, 30).

Life everlasting! This promise does not surprise us. But the other is very remarkable. Even *in this life* the disciples who follow Christ wholly and entirely will be bountifully rewarded. They will receive a hundred-fold, far more than they have left, even *in this time*; liberty of spirit, peace, interior joy, happiness, confidence in God, brotherly love.

It is, however, true that those who enter the cloister take human nature with them; and there also is much human frailty to be found. But in spite of all this, there is but one spirit which pervades the cloister—the spirit of love—a fraternal co-operation in all undertakings. That is the blessing of Christ, the happiness of a religious vocation.

This happiness is mirrored in the daily life of a true Religious. The whole day is consecrated exclusively to God by means of obedience, cheerful labor, and religious exercises. His first awaking in the early hours of the morning is a pious upward glance to the most holy Trinity, whom he adores, and to whom in his prayers he offers up his life, his will, his heart,

and its desires.

In the course of the day, wherever he may be, whatever he may do, he remembers that he is in the house of God, and in the service of God. In this way a laborious and wearisome life seems a paradise to him, dearer than any transitory enjoyment in the palaces of this world.

And in the evening, before he lies down to rest, he closes his day's work in the presence of the blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and commends his spirit to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. And in spirit at least he is never separated from the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary; in thought and desire he is always united with Jesus in the tabernacle, and he can truly say with the prophet "My soul hath desired thee even in the night."

We can form an idea of the sublimity of the religious state, if we reflect on the example of Jesus, the God-man. He led a life of more than angelic purity, a life of mortification, renunciation, and self-denial, and He willed to be born of a pure virgin, and loved Joseph more than any other man, on account of his virginal purity.

When a young man, imitating this great love of Our Lord for purity, takes refuge in the cloister, treading the pleasures of the world under his feet, in order in virginal purity to follow the chaste Lamb of God and His immaculate Mother, will he not then enjoy that sweet delight of pure souls which is unknown to the children of the world? His happiness is indeed a foretaste of the peace and joy of heaven. Finally, Jesus Christ came, not to do His own will, but he humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. If a Religious imitates this example also, and places himself for his whole life under obedience to his spiritual superiors, will he not reap the blessing and the fruits of such a sacrifice? Sublime is the religious state and truly great is the happiness of a Religious. But do you, my friend, trust in God; leave it to Him, whether this happiness is, or is not to be your portion. Pray for

guidance and be ever ready to do the will of God with a cheerful and generous heart.

Jesus, day by day
Lead us on life's way,
Naught of danger shall we reckon,
Following where Thou dost beckon.
Lead us by the hand
To our Fatherland.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on.
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

— Cardinal Newman.

2. The Sacrifices of a Religious Vocation.

Happy are those who are called to the religious state! But we must not look exclusively at the happiness and advantages which accompany life in the cloister, but we must also weigh the sacrifices which it entails. A religious house is no place for lotus-eaters. No one ought to enter the cloister with the idea of exchanging a life of effort and struggle in the world for a quiet and comfortable existence. He who seeks nothing but this in an Order, nothing but sweet tranquillity and undisturbed comfort, will find himself bitterly deceived. Reflect merely upon the trials of community life. Consider one of the essential conditions of life in the cloister, namely, this one: to live with many others and to be dependent upon others. The rules of every convent, quite apart from the question of contact with many others, with many different characters, make demands which are absolutely incompatible with a desire for self-indulgence and self-satisfying solitude.

The Ego we love so well, and cherish so tenderly, can no longer make its claims felt. It is not necessary to think of a specially strict Order where the regulations are peculiarly stringent, but the obligatory observance of the vows is merely to be reflected upon—to possess nothing of one's own, to live in subjection to a superior; this done, it will at once be clearly perceived that self-will can no longer hold the scepter there

Thus we see that the life of a true Religious is a life of constant sacrifice. For he relinquishes all those things which are most calculated to bind poor human beings down to earth. The

evangelical counsels, which the Saviour Himself has given, and to the observance of which the Religious pledges himself, can not be faithfully carried out without grievous sacrifices on the part of the carnal man. Every one knows what these counsels are: voluntary poverty, virginal purity, and constant obedience to a spiritual superior. And Religious pledge themselves to the conscientious observance of these counsels under pain of grievous sin when they pronounce their vows either for their whole life, or at least for a definite period.

It must certainly involve a sacrifice to pronounce the vow of poverty, for instance, and to keep it faithfully. Or can it be easy for a young man who possesses a fortune of his own, and can dispose of it as he pleases, to renounce now and for all future time all claim to call anything his own, or to appropriate anything for his own use without the permission of a superior? Can it be easy for him during the whole of his life in the convent to ask, like a child, for permission to keep a trifling gift, or to exchange it or give it away?

The vow of chastity also involves a great sacrifice, namely, the complete renunciation of married family life—the observance of virginal purity for the Saviour's sake. This sacrifice is peculiarly pleasing to Our Lord.

The Saviour came into the world in a state of poverty; He renounced everything, and was cradled on the rough straw of the manger. But one thing He never gave up; even in the stable His eye wanted to rest upon virginal souls! Therefore He willed to see Mary and Joseph beside the manger. Poor as He came into the world, He also died; His death-bed was the hard wood of the cross. But there also, amid the gloom and sufferings, two lilies of purity, Mary and John, were at the foot of the cross.

Like these lilies ought all those young men to be who are planted in the chosen garden of the Lord, in the religious state. This life of virginal purity involves a perpetual conflict, an en-

deavor to obtain the crown of angels while dwelling in mortal flesh. But this conflict, this struggle, can be termed nothing but sacrifice, renunciation, self-denial.

The third vow is the vow of obedience. How many sacrifices does this single word imply! St. Gregory the Great once said that it is not so difficult to give up one's possessions; but it is difficult indeed to renounce oneself. By obedience one gives up oneself as one gives up one's own will.

This also involves sacrifices. They are often secret sacrifices of which no one knows anything, which the world does not know, which no one extols, but which cut to the quick the inmost soul. But how exalted are these sacrifices, these conquests of self! How richly will the Father, who seeth in secret, reward them one day!

Thus we see that obedience requires continual sacrifices at the hands of a Religious; not one single instant is he, if we may so speak, free from the yoke. Obedience calls him in the morning, and commands him in the evening; obedience orders everything in the house, prescribes the hours of work and the form of that work, the time for prayer and the form of prayer, the time of recreation and the length of that recreation. Obedience guides and controls his every step and movement.

Little enough is the room left for the exercise of self-will. By the practice of obedience a ceaseless war is waged against self.

Therefore if you, my friend, think that you are called to the religious state, examine yourself carefully to discover whether you have strength and courage to make these sacrifices.

Remember the words of St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."

The help of divine grace will not be wanting to you in the event that you should be called to make the sacrifices involved in the religious life. If you have the necessary talents and dis-

positions, go forward courageously! Take up the mighty weapon of obedience; with it combat the enemies of your salvation. Through disobedience man separated himself from God, his creator and final end; through obedience he must return to Him. Even should you remain in the world you will still have to walk in the way of obedience. *Perfect* obedience to their Superiors is demanded of Religious; faithful obedience to the commands of God and of holy Church is incumbent on seculars.

All For Thee, O Heart of Jesus

How sweet it is to feel, dear Lord!
That Thou wilt surely see
Each work, or thought, or act of mine
That may be done for Thee!

That when I try with pure intent
To serve, to please, to love Thee,
Thy watchful Heart each effort knows,
Thy blessing rests above me.

Nothing unnoticed, **nothing** lost —
Unlike the world—in all things
Grateful art Thou for all I do,
For great as well as small things.

Empty my soul of all desire
Man's idle praise to seek
Hide me in Thee, for Thou dost know
How frail I am—and weak.

Take Thou my **all**, since for so long
Thy providence has sought me,
Make me Thine own, since at such cost
Thy precious blood has bought me.

A Few Concluding Words

1. Farewell

How touching is the account given us in Scripture of the farewell which the youthful Tobias took of his blind father and his weeping mother in order to go forth into a strange country. How touching is the lamentation: "Woe, woe is me, my son, why did we send thee to go to a strange country, the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, the comfort of our life, the hope of our posterity?"

A similar feeling of sadness steals into my heart, now that I have arrived at the conclusion of these instructions. You, my young friend, are about to go forth into life, into all the thousand perils and pitfalls which in the present day, more than ever, threaten to ruin both the faith and the innocence of a young man.

But I comfort myself with the thought that I have every reason to say, with the aged father of Tobias: "I believe that the good angel of God doth accompany him, and doth order all things well that are done about him."

This good angel, I know, is your guardian angel, and this little book also, I trust, will serve as your guardian and your guide. It will accompany you when you go forth into the world, and remain always at your side. It depends only upon you that

this companion should remind you what is to be done, and what is to be left undone; you must simply take counsel with it by reading this little volume attentively.

I will now, in taking farewell, briefly recapitulate under five resolutions all that has been said. You must impress these resolutions indelibly on your memory, and adhere to them faithfully.

First Resolution. I will be careful to say my daily prayers regularly, and never to omit hearing Mass on Sundays and holidays without absolute necessity.

This resolution may be epitomized in one word: *Prayer*. Prayer is the pivot on which the spiritual life of every Christian, and certainly of every Catholic young man, revolves; prayer is the very breath of the soul, its vital breath. And bear in mind that by prayer is meant both *vocal* and *mental* prayer Read attentively what is said in this book on mental prayer or meditation. Try to make at least a short meditation every day, or a spiritual reading with pious reflections and devout affections from a book like *The Imitation of Christ*, or *The Lives of the Saints*.

With the Royal Psalmist you should be able to say: "I had in mind the eternal years" (Psalm lxxvi. 6).

"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclesiasticus vii. 40).

"We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come" (Hebrews xiii. 14).

"The number of the days of men at the most are a hundred years: as a drop of water of the sea are they esteemed: and as a pebble of the sand, so are a few years compared to eternity" (Ecclesiasticus xviii. 8).

Say a little prayer daily for the grace of a happy death, e.g. the "Memorare," or "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my

last agony!" "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breath forth my soul in peace with you."

Cultivate a tender love and a fervent devotion to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and to the Mother of Jesus, the ever Blessed Virgin Mary. Cultivate a practical devotion by *imitating* the virtues of Jesus and Mary in your daily life.

Second Resolution. I will make it my practice to receive the sacraments regularly—at least once a month.

Here you may impress on your mind the word: *Sacraments*. Confession and communion constitute a never-failing source, a fount of grace, whereby the life of the soul may be evermore renewed, maintained, and strengthened. It is truly an indispensable condition for the preservation of the supernatural life of the soul that it should draw strengthening waters out of the Saviour's fountains.

Third Resolution. I will carefully avoid everything likely to endanger my faith, especially bad companions, infidel and immoral publications, and luxurious living. See that the light of faith which is in you be not darkened or weakened by listening to conversation opposed to faith and to the Church, or by reading books, pamphlets, and newspapers which have a similar tendency, or by an immoral course of life on *your* part.

Fourth Resolution. In confession I will always be careful, candid, and sincere in regard to the sixth commandment.

This commandment reminds you that you ought to make every effort in order to safeguard and preserve that fairest ornament of your youth, innocence—chastity. The most effectual means to this end is childlike candor in confession. This candor will be your salvation. But alas for you if you do not tell the whole truth, or if you gloss over your transgressions, and conceal your temptations or the perils to which you are exposed.

Fifth Resolution. I will join the *Sodality*, or *The Young Men's Society*, and other Catholic and charitable organizations connected with my parish church, according to my means and circumstances, such as *The League of the Sacred Heart*, *The Society of St. Vincent de Paul* or of *The Holy Name* or of *The Propagation of the Faith*.

Do all you can to further the interests of your parish, church, and school. Your heart should be aflame with a zeal for the House of God as was the heart of David, who was able to say truly: "I have loved, O lord, the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Psalm xxv. 8)

The resolution in regard to joining the *Sodality*, *The Young Men's Society*, or *The Catholic Club* of your parish church is of particular importance. These associations aim at preserving their members from wandering into forbidden paths or to lead them back into the right road, when they have gone astray. Revere and love your pastor; second all his efforts for the welfare of your society; be kind and helpful toward your associates.

In conclusion I will adopt the words which the aged Tobias addressed to his son: "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind, and take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord our God. Take heed to keep thyself, my son, from all fornication; never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words, for from it all perdition took its beginning. May you have a good journey, and God be with you on your way, and his angel accompany you!"

"In doing good, let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing" (Galatians vi. 9).

Wishing

Do you wish the world were better?
Let me tell you what to do.
Set a watch upon your actions,
Keep them always straight and true.
Rid your mind of selfish motives,
Let your thoughts be clean and high.
You can make a little Eden
Of the sphere you occupy.

Do you wish the world were happy?
Then remember day by day
Just to scatter seeds of kindness
As you pass along the way.
For the pleasures of the many
May be ofttimes traced to one,
As the hand that plants the acorn
Shelters armies from the sun.

— Leaflets

To Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Jesus, whose almighty bidding
All created things fulfil,
Lived on earth in meek subjection
To His earthly parents' will.

Sweetest Infant, make us patient
And obedient for Thy sake;
Teach us to be chaste and gentle,
All our stormy passions break.

Blessed Mary! thou wert chosen
As Mother of thy Lord:
Thou didst guide the early footsteps
Of the great Incarnate Word.
Dearest Mother! make us humble;
For thy Son will take His rest
In the poor and lowly dwelling
Of a humble sinner's breast.

Joseph! thou wert called the father
Of thy Maker and thy Lord;
Thine it was to save thy Saviour
From the cruel Herod's sword.
Suffer us to call thee father;
Show to us a fathers love;
Lead us safe through every danger
Till we meet in heaven above.

All for The
Greater Glory of God
And
In honor of the
Blessed Virgin Mary!

2. Quit

Gossiping.

Anticipating evils in the future.

Fault finding, nagging, and worrying.

Dwelling on fancied slights and wrongs.

Scolding and flying into a passion over trifles.

Thinking that life is a grind and not worth living.

Talking constantly about yourself and your affairs.

Saying unkind things about acquaintances and friends.

Lamenting the past, holding on to disagreeable experiences.

Pitying yourself and bemoaning your lack of opportunities.

Writing letters when the blood is hot, which you may regret later.

Thinking that all the good chances and opportunities are gone by.

Carping and criticising. See the best rather than the worst in others.

Dreaming that you would be happier in some other place or circumstances.

Belittling those whom you envy because you feel that they are superior to yourself.

Dilating on your pains and aches and misfortunes to every one who will listen to you.

Speculating as to what you would do in some one else's place, and do your best in your own.

Gazing idly into the future and dreaming about it, instead of making the most of the present.

— London Opinion.

3. A Rule of Life

"He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved."

Daily Conduct.—Have a fixed hour for rising in the morning; bless yourself with holy water, and as soon as possible after your toilet recite devoutly your morning prayers. During the day make at least a short meditation or a spiritual reading. It is commendable to read daily from the *Lives of the Saints*. Hear Mass; make a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. If you cannot go to church, make your visit and adoration at home, turning toward the nearest tabernacle and receiving holy communion spiritually. Recite the *Angelus*; say the beads. In the evening, examine your conscience and recite your evening prayers.

Confession and Communion.—Receive the holy sacraments frequently—once a week or, certainly, once a month. Go as often as you can to holy communion, with the advice of your spiritual director. When you commit any sin, make an act of contrition immediately and resolve to amend; if it is a mortal sin, confess it as soon as possible.

Occasions of Sin.—Avoid idleness, bad companions, low theatres and public balls, immoral books, sensational newspapers, salacious literature, foolish novels and romances, games of chance, and every occasion of sin. In temptations, bless yourself, invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, and think of death. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it."

Sundays.—"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day." Be not satisfied with hearing a Low Mass on Sundays. Hear sermons as often as possible, and listen attentively to the word of God. No matter how poor an orator a priest may be, no matter how plain his language or how unattractive his delivery, remember that he is the representative of Christ, and that you can always find in every sermon sufficient matter for reflection and application to your own life and circumstances. Faithfully attend the meetings of the Sodality or Young Men's Society, and never absent yourself unnecessarily from afternoon or evening services and benediction.

Pious Practices.—Keep yourself in the presence of God. Accustom yourself to saying short ejaculatory and indulgenced prayers. Keep a crucifix, holy pictures, and holy water in your room. Carry your beads with you. Wear a scapular, and a medal of the Immaculate Conception. Support your parish priest and your parish church in all good works. Help the poor and the orphans according to your means. Frequently think of death and eternity.

Blessed Virgin Mary.—If you love Jesus, you will love and honor His blessed Mother. Be most devout to her and daily perform some acts of piety in her honor. A pious *Servant of Mary* will erect a *home-altar* in honor of the heavenly Queen and Mother of God, before which he will recite his prayers. On Our Lady's feast-days he will place an offering of fresh flowers on this altar. Hear Mass and receive holy communion on the great feasts of the Blessed Virgin. Daily renew your act of consecration and say the *Memorare* for a happy death. Cultivate her virtues, especially purity, modesty, meekness, humility, charity, patience, resignation to the will of God, and devotedness to duty.

Retreat.—Make a spiritual retreat once a year.

Spiritual Communion.—An act of spiritual communion like the following should be made frequently, and especially at

Mass: "My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I adore Thee. I praise Thee and thank Thee for all Thy blessings. I am sorry that I have offended Thee by my sins. By this act I wish to make reparation to Thee for all the insults and injuries committed against Thee in the Sacrament of Thy love. I love Thee with my whole heart. Come to my poor soul; unite Thyself to me...✠...I thank Thee, my good Jesus. Oh! never, never leave me. Let me not be separated from thee by sin."

In the Hour of Death.—When you are dying, make acts of contrition and of love. Pronounce the sweet and holy name of "Jesus."

In life and in death, praise and be submissive to the holy will of God.

Strive to become a saint. For "this is the will of God, your sanctification."

"The number of the days of men at the most are a hundred years: as a drop of water of the sea are they esteemed: and as a pebble of the sand, so are a few years compared to eternity" (Ecclesiasticus xviii. 8).

"Now to the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy i. 17).